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IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY AT CROSSWAY CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP, PELHAM, ALABAMA, TO DEVELOP
MEMBERS WHO PRACTICE
LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM

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PREFACE

I have been richly blessed by God with great supporters. The first is my wife, Katrina. She has been my greatest cheerleader, encourager, and supporter. Words alone are inadequate for me to express how Katrina has enabled and empowered me to plant a church and be a seminary student at the same time. She has consistently and faithfully invested in me and sacrificed substantially in order for me to pursue my ministerial calling and dream. All that I am is due to God and how He has used my wife to push me to be the best that I can be. Next, our children, Kianna Renee and Joshua James, have greatly assisted their father in completing this project. They have paid a great price in allowing their dad to sacrifice time away from them to complete this project. To this day, they have been a joy to parent. Third, my mother-in-law, Kathalyne Birdsong (a.k.a. Dr. Moms), has been a source of encouragement and inspiration. She has assisted my wife and me in taking care of our children while I was traveling to the seminary for seminars. She and my wife have served as my primary editors and proofreaders for this project (along with all of my seminary work). This project is as much a product of their efforts as it is mine.

I'm grateful to God in blessing me to know the following people who have assisted and shaped me through this academic journey and project. God used Pastor Richard Gaines to re-affirm the call of ministry in my life as well as having a vision for the type of church and ministry that I desired to pastor. He was the first person to insist that I enroll at the seminary and participate in the D.Min program. It was through Pastor Gaines that I was first introduced to Dr. T. Vaughn Walker, my program professor and faculty supervisor, in the summer of 2009. Dr. Walker assured me that where my M.Div. degree may not have completely prepared me for real world ministry, this degree

program would equip me for ministry today. His words proved to be true. Dr Walker has represented the program and seminary well, keeping me encouraged and motivated, not only as a student and a pastor, but also as a friend (especially during the loss of my brother and mother in 2012). Next, I am indebted to my friend and fellow seminarian Rev. Gregory Moore. He has been a big brother to me, guiding me along the process, keeping me encouraged (especially when I felt like giving up), and inspiring me to go on for the Lord. Through him I was referred to Mrs. Betsy Frederick. I am grateful for her agreeing to be my project editor. Not only has she made this project go without unnecessary anguish and pain (hand carrying and spoon feeding me along the way), she also provided me with moral support. Without Dr. Stacey Boutwell, Dr. Hugh Richardson, Dr. Bob Brown, Dr. Clarke Skelton, and Rev. Michael Jones, I do not know where I would be.

This project would not be possible without the congregation of CrossWay Christian Fellowship. For over four years, the congregation of this small church plant has allowed me to experience and experiment ministry. Their willing participation and prayers for me and this project have been consistent and unwavering. The birth and completion of this project is as much a fruit of their labor as it has been mine.

Frederick Clay Muse

Pelham, Alabama

December 2014

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to implement a strategy at CrossWay Christian Fellowship, Pelham, Alabama, that would develop members who practiced lifestyle evangelism.

Goals

The first goal was to provide a biblical paradigm that influenced congregants to make a commitment to lifestyle evangelism. Members were made aware of their biblical responsibilities through a twelve-week sermon series entitled “Be My Witnesses.” This series was taught for twelve consecutive weeks during Sunday morning corporate worship services. The congregation was given a Be My Witness pre-project survey to assess their present experience as a believer. During week 14 of the project, the congregation (those who participated in week 2) was given the Be My Witness post-project survey. The survey measured how peoples’ attitudes and perspectives have changed pertaining to their responsibilities to lifestyle evangelism after being exposed to God’s Word. This goal was successful since greater than 75 percent of the participants signed a “Be My Witness Commitment Card,” which indicated their commitment and responsibility to practicing lifestyle evangelism.

The second goal was to develop a seminar to equip members to cultivate intentional relationships with people with the express purpose of practicing lifestyle evangelism. I was responsible for developing the Seminar Guide. A five-member seminar oversight team was formed and commissioned with the responsibility of critiquing and

evaluating the Seminar Guide. After developing the Seminar Guide for the seminar, the five-member oversight team was provided with a copy of the Seminar Guide and a Seminar Guide Feasibility Study (SGFS). The SGFS was used to gauge the effectiveness and feasibility of using the Seminar Guide in educating and equipping believers in practicing lifestyle evangelism. This goal was successful since 100 percent of the five-member oversight team approved the Seminar Guide.

The third goal was to implement a seminar that would educate and equip CrossWay members to practice lifestyle evangelism. The venue for this seminar was a small group class. The seminar occurred over a weekend retreat, with each class being ninety minutes in length. This seminar was successful and will be the system for assimilating and empowering new members at CrossWay to practice lifestyle evangelism. Participants in the seminar were asked to complete a pre-seminar intentional relationship building survey (IRB survey) prior to beginning the seminar and a post-seminar IRB survey and feedback session was completed immediately after the seminar (week 14). The IRB survey correlated and measured spiritual activity in response to relationship building. This feedback also determined how effective the seminar was in achieving its goal in being a viable venue for lifestyle evangelism training. During the feedback session, participants were given the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar. This goal was successful since a t-test displayed a positive statistical increase between the pre and post-IRB surveys.

Ministry Context

CrossWay Christian Fellowship is an evolving, cold start, Southern Baptist church plant located in Pelham, Alabama.¹ CrossWay began in August 2009 when I met

¹Aubrey Malphurs defines a nonexistent core group cold start: “A cold start involves gathering believers together who are not already part of a group. There are Christians already living in the target area, but they may not know one another and are not meeting together for the purpose of planting a church.” Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting*

with the local Southern Baptist Association, the Shelby Baptist Association (SBA), led by Hugh Richardson, the associational missionary, and Bob Brown, the church planting strategist. They believed that there was a need for a new African-American church that would target the growing African-American population in Alabaster, Alabama. The only stipulation I had toward their vision for a new African-American church plant was that this church plant would intentionally strive to be multi-racial in composition. After two meetings with Richardson and Brown, my wife and I believed that God had equipped and shaped us for this church plant. While attending church planting boot camp, the embryo of CrossWay began to develop. As the church planter, my desire and vision for CrossWay is to be a Christ-centered, Bible-believing, culturally relevant, and spiritually vital church committed to winning unbelievers to faith in Christ. Upon completion of boot camp (August 30, 2009), my wife and I immediately began recruiting families we believed would buy into the vision of CrossWay: “To glorify God as a worshiping, witnessing and working community locally, nationally and globally.”

CrossWay began in 2012 with some challenges that impacted how the church approached evangelism. Towards the end of 2011, problems occurred in the small group ministry meeting in a member’s home that caused me to take control of the ministry. As a result, the small group ministry began meeting on the first Sunday of the month at the Pelham YMCA prior to corporate worship. The other problem that occurred happened simultaneously within the confines of the small group meeting. This problem revealed the need for the church to place immediate attention on the development of a discipleship ministry that would educate, equip, and encourage biblically strong marriages that would stem the tide of divorce. Despite the unforeseen challenges that occurred, CrossWay was able to place an emphasis on both evangelism and outreach with its partnership with the Pelham YMCA. CrossWay was afforded the opportunity to host a modified form of

Growing Churches for the 21st Century (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 166.

Vacation Bible School that met twice a week (three hours a day) for eight weeks during the Y's normal summer day camp program. As a result of this effort, three kids made professions of faith. At the end of 2012, CrossWay experienced 3 professions of faith, 0 baptisms, 3 new faith families, 35 visitors and an average weekly attendance of 25 people.

Going into 2013, prior to commencing this doctoral proposal and project, CrossWay's evolution as a church plant would influence the way evangelism and discipleship would look. Though CrossWay is still in the developmental phase of church planting, as a church planter, I am concerned with its current situation. Since 2011, CrossWay has not witnessed a person being baptized, which is a cause to be alarmed. To me, baptism is a measurable, outward, and tangible indicator of people professing Jesus Christ as their Savior. As a result, as a church planter, I was concerned that CrossWay is not moving forward in a positive direction. In retrospect, I realized that I have made two mistakes.

The first error that I made was correlating external marketing efforts with effective evangelism. CrossWay's efforts to reach new people through various marketing activities without building personal relationships have not yielded great returns. For example, during the incubation phase (while meeting at another church), the road-side street banners inviting seekers and visitors to attend the adult Bible study on Sunday evenings did not yield any visitors during the seven-month period. Prior to CrossWay's September 12, 2010 launch of its first corporate worship service, the church employed the following marketing activities: CrossWay's members hand delivered personal invitations and gospel tracts to over thirteen thousands residential homes welcoming people to attend the corporate worship service, acquired billboard advertisement for a period of thirty months, and a full-page advertisement in Alabaster, Helena, and Pelham newsletters. As of May 2013, CrossWay had 146 visitors on record (people completing CrossWay's Communication Card). CrossWay's data revealed that 11 people heard about

the church through the billboard, 6 from the newsletter advertisement, 2 from the website, and 127 people were through personal invitation. The information that disturbed me as a church planter was the decline of visitors over the years. In 2010, CrossWay had 45 visitors; 2011, 51 visitors; 2012, 35 visitors; and as of May 2013, 15 visitors. After analyzing the church's data pertaining to visitors' responses in how they heard about CrossWay, it became evident that if CrossWay is to grow and progress as a church, then fulfilling the church's vision in becoming a witnessing fellowship is vital to survival.

The second error I made as a church planter was failing to have in place a strategic, proactive witnessing plan that focuses on discipleship and evangelism simultaneously. Since CrossWay's inception, discipleship training developed as a result from reacting to a crisis or problem at that particular moment. Similarly, CrossWay's evangelism and outreach efforts have occurred randomly as needs and opportunities have arisen. As a result and to my dismay as a church planter and pastor, CrossWay has not developed and grown as I had envisioned it would. It is critical for me as a church planter and pastor to adjust the direction CrossWay is heading. To achieve this objective, it is paramount that I lead CrossWay to take proactive measures in becoming a viable fellowship by implementing a biblical strategy for evangelism.

Rationale for the Project

To survive and become a viable fellowship, it is essential for CrossWay to make its vision statement a reality by exercising and implementing its intentional witnessing strategy. CrossWay's greatest need to date (and in the future) is practicing a God-honoring evangelism strategy that will encourage and motivate members to become intentional in building relationships with people with the express purpose of sharing Christ (lifestyle evangelism). From my previous experiences as a church planter and pastor, I have come to learn that effective evangelism is dependent on effective discipleship and vice versa. CrossWay now has a focused, strategic evangelism and

discipleship system that reflects its vision and philosophy of ministry. If CrossWay fails in this area, simply put, the church plant is destined and doomed to die on the vine.

The following benefits resulted from developing and implementing a system that educated and equipped members who practice lifestyle evangelism. First, this project equipped and empowered members to take ownership and responsibility of the vision and ministry of evangelism at CrossWay. Simultaneously, members can experience a spiritually healthy relationship with God and others in the body of Christ. Next, this project enabled members to build relationships with the parents (of the children CrossWay ministers to through the modified Vacation Bible School during the summer) by leveraging the pre-existing relationships presently established. Finally, this project provided both the foundation and framework for evangelism and discipleship at CrossWay. My desire for CrossWay is not to grow through sheep swapping. CrossWay's goal is to reach unbelievers and unchurched people. Winning unbelievers and unchurched to Christ is the process of growing a church the hard way. Reaching these people requires CrossWay to go to them because they are not coming to CrossWay. People are not taking the initiative to come to CrossWay. CrossWay's ability to grow is tied directly to building personal relationships with people. Building relationships requires intentionality. I firmly believe this project took a proactive and intentional step in the right direction in establishing a time-tested method of fulfilling the Great Commission in making disciples through lifestyle evangelism.

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Lifestyle evangelism. Reid writes,

We were created to worship. Out of that context we proclaim the good news of the One we worship so that others can join that movement. Ultimately the goal of growth in Christ in this life is to become a daily, moment-by-moment Christ-follower who shares His gospel not out of compulsion or from an assignment but because it is our very nature. . . . Missional witness means we witness in the context of our lifestyle with people we know and have a relationship. It is more holistic—unlike knocking on a door of a stranger, being missional means there may be times when you will not talk about Christ explicitly with the other person but are always

seeking to demonstrate a changed life. I have neighbors I want to see saved. I do not share Christ every time we have a conversation. In some cases they would never talk to me. I try hard to be a good neighbor and a good friend. The remarkable thing is that by doing this, most of the time the neighbor brings up spiritual matters! My goal is to see all my neighbors saved. In the meantime, I want to be a friend. But friends do not let friends go to hell. . . . Missional witness means we will build relationships with others who do not know Christ to love them to Him. It means we will appreciate (though sometimes not embrace) their interests and cultural distinctive.²

Servant evangelism. In his book *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*, Steve Sjogren defines servant evangelism: “Evangelism must contain the right words, but that those words must follow the demonstration of the love of God. The following equation states how this approach works: servant evangelism = deeds of love + words of love + adequate time.”³

Witness. Daniel Meyer defines witness

as the process by which someone bears external evidence of discipleship, to the end that God is glorified and others are drawn toward him. While many people equate witness with verbal testimony, in its fullest biblical sense witness or witnessing refers to the message a disciple’s whole life gives to the transforming power of Jesus Christ.⁴

A significant limitation is the fifteen-week duration of the project. Due to the brevity and restriction of time, the scope and depth of implementing a strategy to develop members who practice lifestyle evangelism at CrossWay was somewhat limited. Therefore, adjustments and changes occurred since the project was completed. This project established a system for discipleship and evangelism at CrossWay consistent with its mission and vision statement.

The following serves as a delimitation to this project. Implementing a strategy to develop members who practice lifestyle evangelism at CrossWay occurred only within

²Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 283-84.

³Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 23.

⁴Daniel Meyer, *Witness Essentials: Evangelism That Makes Disciples* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 17-18.

the context of one local church, which is CrossWay Christian Fellowship in Pelham, Alabama.

Research Methodology

Working with a small number of people at CrossWay, one of the challenges was applying different devices to secure input without being redundant. Another concern was overtaxing participants with too many feedback devices. As a result, research devices were spread out over the fifteen-week period. For goal 1, two devices of measurement were used. First, I employed a Be My Witness pre-project survey during week 2 of the sermon series. The Be My Witness pre-project survey was aimed to gauge how peoples' attitudes and perspectives changed in being a witness after being exposed to God's Word. The ministry of the Word, during Sunday morning corporate worship services, provides the primary venue for biblical instruction and discipleship. Feedback from the Be My Witness post-project survey (week 14) indicated the effectiveness of discipleship and biblical instruction through this venue of ministry. The Be My Witness post-project survey also measured the effect of the ministry of the Word of God in producing life transformation pertaining to lifestyle evangelism.

For goal 2, the five-member oversight team was provided with a Seminar Guide Feasibility Study (SGFS), along with the Seminar Guide. The SGFS was used to gauge the effectiveness and feasibility of using the Seminar Guide in educating and equipping believers in practicing lifestyle evangelism. This feedback determined how viable the Seminar Guide was in achieving its goal for training members to practice lifestyle evangelism.

For goal 3, participants in the seminar was asked to complete a pre-project intentional relationship building survey (IRB survey) prior to beginning the seminar (week 14) and a post-project IRB survey to be completed immediately after the seminar (week 14). The IRB survey correlated and measured spiritual activity in response to

relationship building. This feedback determined how effective the seminar was in achieving its goal in being a viable venue for personal evangelism training. I reviewed and compiled all the results.⁵

⁵All research instruments were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR BEING A WITNESS

Witnesses: Background and Definition

F. L. Fisher states, “A thorough study of witnessing would necessitate a study of the whole Bible. Such words as preaching, teaching, and confessing would have to be included.”¹ For the purposes of this project, the research is limited to the biblical passages in Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8, Luke 24:48, and Acts 1:8 that pertain to witnesses. Lifestyle evangelism and witnessing are predicated upon the biblical concept and meaning of how God in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament use the word witness (actual term “witnesses”). Holman Bible Dictionary defines the word “witness” as “the testimony of a person, or something which bears testimony to a person or an event.”² Based upon the context of Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8, Luke 24:48, and Acts 1:8, the definition can be expanded to include the testimony of things seen, heard, transacted or experienced.

In most cases, the background and environment for the term “witnesses” is that of the legal sphere or courtroom setting. Buckwalter states,

The biblical concept of testimony or witness is closely allied with the conventional Old Testament legal sense of testimony given in a court of law. . . . Its validity consists in certifiable, objective facts. In both Testaments, it appears as the primary standard for establishing and testing truth claims. Uncertifiable subjective claims, opinions, and beliefs, on the contrary, appear in Scripture as inadmissible testimony. . . . Thus, within Scripture an inseparable bond exists between the message and its historical reliability on the basis of sound testimony. . . . In the Old Testament, the

¹F. L. Fisher, “Witness, Witnessing,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1175.

²William Vermillion, “Witness,” *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman, 1991), 1413-14.

truth claims have to do mainly with God and the revelation of himself to Israel; in the New Testament, this picture is greatly deepened with the additional revelation of Jesus Christ, and now to all the world.”³

The Old Testament Hebrew word used for witnesses in both passages in Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8 is *ed*, which “refers to the legal element of witness. One rendered testimony based on observation which was to be true and faithful.”⁴ Richards makes the following observations pertaining to this word:

According to the law of the OT, a “witness” (*ed*) was someone with firsthand knowledge who could report what he saw or heard (e.g., Lev 5:1). . . . The underlying concept, then, suggests a strong statement by one with firsthand knowledge of what he or she knows. The testimony may be in a court case. . . . It may also be a strong verbal or symbolic statement of assured truth.⁵

In Isaiah 43 and 44, Israel is a witness to the uniqueness, reality, and deity of God on the basis of her experience of being chosen by God. Being a witness is serious business and not to be taken lightly:

The people of Israel themselves were declared God’s witnesses (Is 43:10; 44:8, 9). They were witnesses to the existence of God, to his uniqueness, holiness, power, and love. When they failed to acknowledge his uniqueness and holiness and turned to polytheism, he sent them into captivity, as he had warned, for they had failed in their witness and had given opportunity for the enemies of God to blaspheme.⁶

God expects his people to bear testimony as to who he is and what he has done for them.

Buckwalter emphasizes this point:

In Isaiah 43:8-13, the prophet depicts the nations as forming a legal assembly to proclaim the superiority and saving work of their gods. But their case proves groundless. Their gods are blind and deaf, mere idols made of the commonest materials; their makers are nothing but men. Hence, their message is nothing but a lie (43:10, 12; 44:9-20). The nations ultimately have no case, because they lack any evidence to support their claims (44:11). In the same assembly, Israel takes the

³H. Douglas Buckwalter, “Testimony,” in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 765-66.

⁴Vermillion, “Witness,” 1413-14.

⁵Lawrence O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), s.v. “testify/witness/testimony.”

⁶Carl E. DeVries, “Witness,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 4:2154-55.

witness stand (43:10, 12; 44:8) to proclaim Yahweh as the Lord and that apart from him there is no savior (43:11). Their case, in contrast, is undeniable. Israel's history proves it. God has historically, time and again, revealed himself to Israel and redeemed them from oppression (43:12). God's revelation of himself to Moses, his giving of the law, his abiding presence in the tabernacle (and temple) and his redemption of Israel from Egypt provide the Israelite witnesses with solid evidence to support their claims to the nations God's lordship and that salvation can be found only in him. Here, testimony is equivalent to proclamation. It presents historical evidence attesting to God's unique person, position, and work. It simultaneously is evangelistic: the message of God's saving work in Israel's history becomes itself an offer of salvation to those listening.⁷

Witnesses were of focal significance to Old Testament law. In the Old Testament, the chief usage of witnesses is in the legal sphere, referring to facts or personal experiences. In proceeding to the New Testament, the theme of giving account is also of principal significance to evangelism, which rests upon Christians explaining the impact of Jesus Christ upon their lives.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for witnesses found in Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8 is *martus*. In approaching the two selected passages in the New Testament (Luke 24:47-49 and Acts 1:8), it is necessary to understand the similar heritage that they both share. Both passages share the same author (Luke, the physician), and his use of the word "witnesses" is the same. This word is

mainly related to the root *martureō*, "to bear witness, be a witness." The word "martyr" shows the ultimate form of witness in that one may be called upon to lay down his life as a witness to the truth or because of his witness for Jesus Christ. The followers of Jesus, and particularly the twelve, were witnesses to the person and character of Jesus. They were specifically commissioned to be his witnesses at the time of his ascension (Acts 1:8), with the promise of the enabling of the Holy Spirit for this work (vv. 4, 8).⁸

Next, there is a strong connection between Isaiah and Luke's usage of the word "witnesses". First, in the Septuagint the word for "witnesses" in Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8 is the same word in the Greek found in Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8.⁹ Second, Bock

⁷Buckwalter, "Testimony," 767.

⁸DeVries, "Witness," 2154-55.

⁹Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996), in *Libronix Digital Library System* (Bellingham, WA: Logos,

agrees with the connection when he states,

So they are to be “witnesses” (martyres) for Jesus. The idea has OT roots in the concept of witness (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17: 6-7; Isa. 43:10-12; 44:8-9). Jesus also spoke of witnesses in a legal sense (Matt. 18:16), as do passages discussing activity or potential activity in the church (2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19). A witness in this sense is someone who helps establish facts objectively through verifiable observation. As such, a witness is more than someone with merely subjective and personal impressions. This objectivity and fact-based quality of witness are why the direct experience of Jesus’ ministry and resurrection are required of Judas’s replacement in Acts 1:21-22, a passage that shows what stands behind Luke’s use of this term. Thus “witness” is a key term in Acts for those who experienced Jesus and saw him in a resurrection appearance (1:22). This experience means that they can testify directly to what God did through Jesus (Luke 24:48).¹⁰

Next, Luke’s usage of the term “witnesses” (in both the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts) is in an active, evangelistic sense. Fisher attests that Luke’s usage of the term “witnesses” set in motion how evangelism is defined and approached today:

The pattern of Christian missionary and evangelistic activity is set in the NT. Several principles emerge. (1) Witnessing is the universal obligation of all Christians (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8). That the act of witnessing was not restricted to the apostles or ministers is shown by those references in Acts which speak of all the disciples giving testimony (cf. Acts 2:4).¹¹

Isaiah 6:1-13 Illustrates God’s Call to Be a Witness

Isaiah 6 provides the foundation and sets the stage for the theology of evangelism; the priority of personal salvation and God’s expectation that his people are to be his witnesses. Personal salvation is absolutely necessary for effective evangelism. It is the first requirement in being a witness for God. Isaiah 6 provides a model of being commissioned by God in being a witness for him after experiencing a self-revelation of him. From an Old Testament perspective, this passage provides a complete picture of the

2007).

¹⁰Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 63-64.

¹¹Fisher, “Witness, Witnessing,” 1175.

process of an individual experiencing personal salvation and being commissioned to serve the Lord as a witness. Though this passage has been documented as Isaiah's commissioning to ministry (not conversion to salvation), the text illustrates the conversion, consecration, and commission process necessary in being a witness for God. The doctrine of salvation is an extensive subject matter.¹² Due to the constraints of this project, this discussion is limited to the beginning aspects of salvation.¹³ The final requirement in being a witness for God is being receptive to God's commission.

God's Self-Revelation

In verse 1, Isaiah's vision begins with the revelation of God ("I saw the Lord"). God's revelation of himself is an act of grace. Berkhof writes, "Without revelation man would never have been able to acquire any knowledge of God. And even after God has revealed Himself objectively, it is not human reason that discovers God, but it is God who discloses Himself to the eye of faith."¹⁴ Scripture indicates that God, not man, takes the initiative (John 3:16). Salvation begins and ends with God (Ps 3:8; Acts 4:12). For a person to experience salvation, it is necessary for God to reveal himself. Wayne Grudem writes,

If we are to know God at all, it is necessary that he reveal himself to us. . . . With regard to personal knowledge of God that comes in salvation, this idea is even more explicit. Jesus says, "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows

¹²I accept and embrace the doctrine of salvation stated in LifeWay's commentary of *The Baptist Faith and Message* (chap. 7 references article 4 of the 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message*). Charles S. Kelley, Jr., Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2007), 65-76.

¹³The beginning aspects of salvation are described in Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 929-46. See also Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 692-721. Grudem refers to the subjective aspects of salvation: effectual calling, regeneration, and conversion

¹⁴Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 34.

the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27).¹⁵

In this revelation of himself, God demonstrates grace towards Isaiah. Scripture states that no man can see God and live (Exod 33:20; John 1:18). Watts confirms this when he states, “It is astonishing enough that he has been allowed to see ‘the King, YHWH of Hosts,’ and still be alive. Hebrew tradition held that to be impossible (Exod 24:10).”¹⁶ When the exceptions have occurred (Hagar—Gen 16:13; Moses—Exod 33:18-23), God desired to make himself known. God’s revelation of himself (primarily his holiness) is necessary for salvation. Smith writes,

The necessary first step before any true confession of sin is having an understanding of the glory and holiness of Almighty God who rules the heavens and earth. . . . The shocking, life changing aspect of his vision was that Isaiah himself experienced a vivid and powerful personal meeting with God that allowed him to have a firsthand glimpse of the supernatural realm.¹⁷

The revelation of God brings about the realization of the need for salvation.

Personal Conversion

In verse 5, the revelation of God leads to the awareness of an individual’s (in this case Isaiah’s) total inability¹⁸ to merit salvation. This awareness produces confession and the need for atonement. While simultaneously looking upon the glory of God, Isaiah was instantly made aware of his condition as well as the condition of the people he lived among. When Isaiah beheld the glory of God, specifically God’s holiness, Isaiah was

¹⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 149.

¹⁶John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 108.

¹⁷Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15A (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 192.

¹⁸McKim defines total inability as “a concept found in Reformed theology to stress the view that because of their sinfulness, humans are not able to perform any action that will lead to their salvation. God must take the initiative to give the gift of faith and repentance.” Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), s.v. “total inability.”

made aware of the hopeless and despicable dilemma that existed with him and the nation of Israel. As a result of this observation, Isaiah understood the ruined condition of his life before God. This situation caused Isaiah to cry out to God in confession. Erickson explains Isaiah's (and every human being's) predicament:

It is a point of repeated emphasis in the Bible that the believer is to be like God. Thus, because God is holy, they who are his followers are also to be holy. . . . Those who are his must therefore seek the same holiness that is so basic to his own nature. Isaiah, upon seeing God, became very much aware of his own impurity. He despaired, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isa. 6:5). . . . When one measures one's holiness, not against the standard of oneself or of other humans, but against God, the need for a complete change of moral and spiritual condition becomes apparent.¹⁹

The purpose for God revealing himself to Isaiah was not to destroy him; it was an act of grace. God desired to save him so that he could be a witness for him in the future. Oswalt comments,

This verse (6) speaks of the depths of God's grace. Isaiah does not plead for mercy, nor does he make great vows if God will but deliver him. All of the evidence makes it appear that he considers his case hopeless. Yet out of the smoke comes a seraph with a purifying coal. God does not reveal himself to destroy us, but rather to redeem us (so with Jacob in Gen. 32, and with the Israel in Exod. 19-24).²⁰

In verse 6, Isaiah's confession leads to God providing atonement by cleansing Isaiah of his sins and consecrating him for future service as a witness (vv. 6-7). Verses 6-7 represent an illustration of how God provides salvation for the individual (in this case, Isaiah). Salvation is totally a work of God. As seen in verse 7, Isaiah was in no way responsible for his cleansing and atonement. Smith observes,

Once Isaiah confessed his sinfulness and his need for deliverance ("I am ruined"), God reached out through the instrumentality of a seraph to bring atonement. This was an act of God's grace; Isaiah did nothing to accomplish his atonement. Isaiah offered no sacrifices, did not promise to be a missionary to gain it, and had no power to save himself from certain ruin. To help Isaiah understand that God was removing his guilt, a seraph took a coal from an altar and touched Isaiah's unclean

¹⁹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 285-86.

²⁰John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 184.

lips. . . . These were not magical coals (neither are people baptized in magical water), rather they figuratively represent the miraculous accomplishment of God's gracious purification and forgiveness. When the seraph symbolically touched Isaiah's lips, it announced that God "removed" (*sār*) Isaiah's guilt (an active verb) and that his sin "was atoned" (*tēkuppār*) by God (a passive verb). God did not want Isaiah to misunderstand what was happening, so a clear explanation was provided to interpret the symbolic action. The removal of guilt indicates that the consequent punishment will not be exacted from Isaiah. This guilt can no longer keep Isaiah from God's presence. The atonement means that God's wrath and the sin that motivated it were satisfied and taken away, making renewed fellowship possible. Sin no longer separated God and Isaiah (cf. 59:1-2). Isaiah's experience illustrates how any believer can identify sin (have a clear vision of the holiness of God), how everyone should respond when sin is recognized (admit it), and how God deals with confessed sin (he removes it). People who presume upon God's mercy because of their supposed goodness will fail to receive his forgiveness, but those who perceive the holiness of God will quickly acknowledge their great guilt and experience his atoning love.²¹

Commissioned to Witness

Isaiah's conversion and consecration experience entails being commissioned to serve God as his witness (v. 8). Isaiah's conversion experience (vv. 5-7) immediately makes him aware of God's desire for someone to be a witness for him. Mysteriously implanted in the act of salvation, God calls and commissions believers to do good works (Eph 2:8-10) by being a witnesses for him. Witnessing is responding to God's desire of making his glory known to men throughout the earth. This is epitomized by Isaiah's response, initiated by God when he revealed his glory and provided salvation, forgiveness, and cleansing to Isaiah. Within the call, God expects recipients of his gracious salvation to respond positively and volunteer to be his witness. Witnessing is an act of obedience to the express will of God. When God expressed his desire for someone to be his representative, Isaiah immediately responded to the call and commission of God. Oswalt makes a strong case for explaining why experiencing God's salvation and being his witness is a no brainer. In commenting on Isaiah 6:8, he writes,

Now, for the first time, God speaks. It is as if Isaiah was not ready to hear before this moment, as if the possibility of service could not be appreciated until this time. But for whatever reason, God makes it plain that while spiritual experience is never

²¹Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 192-93.

merely a means to an end, neither is it an end in itself. Unless that experience issues in some form of lived-out praise to God, it will turn upon itself and putrefy. It is very possible, in the light of 1 Kings 22:19, that *who will go for us* is an address to the heavenly host, either visibly present or implied. That Isaiah is neither directly addressed nor coerced is suggestive. Perhaps it is so because Isaiah does not need coercion, but rather needs an opportunity to volunteer. Having believed with certainty that he was about to be crushed into existence by the very holiness of God and having received an unsought for, and unmerited, complete cleansing, what else would he rather do than hurl himself into God's service? Those who need to be coerced are perhaps too little aware of the immensity of God's grace toward them. So, unlike Adam and Eve, who sought to hide from the searching voice, Isaiah, permitted for a moment to eavesdrop on the councils of God, cannot keep silent. "Would I do?" Such a grateful offering of themselves is always the cry of those who have received God's grace after they have given up hope of ever being acceptable to God. The sequential relationship of the elements ought not to be overlooked. Each element leads to the next. The king's death prepares the way for the vision of God; the vision of God leads to self-despair; self-despair opens the door to cleansing; cleansing makes it possible to recognize the possibility of service; the total experience then leads to an offering of oneself.²²

After experiencing God's grace, giving one's life in service is the least that one can do.

Isaiah 6 portrays why being a witness and witnessing is tied to the salvation experience provided by the grace of God.

Isaiah 43:10-12 and 44:8 Provide God's Expectation of His People

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God." (Isa 43:10-12)²³

Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one. (Isa 44:8)

God's People Are His Witnesses

From an Old Testament perspective, Isaiah 43:10-12 and 44:8 are the closest and best biblical texts that exemplify Jesus' Great Commission texts of the New

²²Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 185.

²³All Scripture references are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

Testament (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:80): that God's people are to be his witnesses. In discussing this passage of Scripture, the doctrine of salvation and its impact and effect on the life of believers pertaining to being God's witnesses, it is not my intent to open the proverbial Pandora's box to discuss the various viewpoints pertaining to election. As Grudem states pertaining to election, "There has been much controversy in the church and much misunderstanding over this doctrine. Many of the controversial questions regarding man's will and responsibility and regarding the justice of God with respect to human choices."²⁴ My goal is to demonstrate the interconnection between God's plan of salvation for his people and his ultimate goal for his people to demonstrate their loyalty to him by being his witnesses. What is indisputable are the facts that God is sovereign (1 Chr 29:11-12), that he chooses as he wills (Ps 115:3), that when he chose the children of Israel, it was based in part to a covenantal promise he made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), and that part of that promise entailed their salvation (Gen 15:13-16). Included in the salvation of God's people is God's desire and expectation that his people will serve him by being his witnesses.

The background and setting for Isaiah 43 and 44 provides the necessary information to understand God's expectation for his people to be his witnesses. The heavenly law court serves as the backdrop for both God the Father (here in Isa 43:10-12 and 44:8) and Jesus (Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8) in understanding the meaning behind the term "witnesses." Pertaining to the genre of Isaiah 43 and 44, Smith states,

The assembling of people to serve as witnesses (43:9-10, 12) suggests that 43:8-15 may be imitating certain characteristics of a trial speech, though it is not as clearly presented as in 41:21-29. Nations are gathered together for this event and witnesses are called to testify; the aim of this interrogation is to determine who is right, and in the end a verdict is pronounced. Nevertheless, as H. C. Spykerboer properly maintains, "The main thrust in the passage is not a trial of the nations, but the self-revelation of Yahweh." What is unique about this legal imagery is that both Israelite witnesses and people from the nations are summoned in order that they might come

²⁴Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 670.

to know who God is. Thus it is a stretch to suggest that the legal language and imagery actually depict a trial.²⁵

Israel being chosen by God stems from God's call and covenantal promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. McKim defines election as "God's choosing of a people to enjoy the benefits of salvation and to carry out God's purposes in the world (1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Peter 1:10)."²⁶ Scripture states that Israel (and Gentiles—1 Cor 1:26-31; 1 Pet 2:4-5) were not chosen due to anything noteworthy or through self-merit, but an act of grace demonstrated by God in order that they may have the wonderful privilege of knowing and experiencing him (Deut 7:6-9). Smith writes,

Why were the Israelites chosen to be God's servants and witnesses? God answered that he chose them 'so that [they] may know and believe me,' a response that focuses on Israel's own personal relationship with God as a fundamental goal of God's involvement with them. This included a personal recognition of God's divine sovereign power, plus a firm commitment to accept his will and to faithfully follow his guidance.²⁷

God's people are his witnesses based upon their special relationship and salvation experience with Yahweh. Israel's historic experience of God's salvation was prophesied in Genesis 15:14-16 and came to fulfillment in Exodus 13:17-14:31.

Concerning Israel's special relationship to God, Oswalt comments on Isaiah 43:11,

This much is predictable; it is the logical conclusion of what has preceded. But what follows is not so predictable, and is the more surprising because later expressions of this statement do adhere to what one might expect, such as "I am the Lord, and there is no other God" (45:5, 18, 22; 46:9). But here the Lord's saviorhood is declared to be unique: *apart from me there no savior*. On further consideration of the context, however, this conclusion is logical. God has insisted that Israel has witnessed the evidence that he alone is God. What had that evidence been? The promise to make Abraham a great nation; the promise to deliver his descendants from Egypt; the promise to give them the land of Canaan; the promise to make the dynasty of David secure on the throne of Jerusalem, and so on. What had the fulfillment of those promises required again and again? Deliverance, often over impossible odds. In the

²⁵Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New American Commentary, vol. 15B (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 198, in *Logos Bible Software 5.2* (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2000-2014).

²⁶McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. "election."

²⁷Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 202.

process of demonstrating his character as Yahweh to his people, he had demonstrated to them over and over his inclination and his capacity to save. What Israel had witnessed and could not escape was the realization that “Yahweh” meant “Savior,” and that as Yahweh was the only God, he was the only Savior. In the first part of his book, Isaiah had demonstrated that God alone can be trusted, that all other resources, especially the nations, would fail. Now he is showing that when we have refused to trust and have reaped the logical results of our false dependencies, God alone can save.²⁸

Incumbent in saving his covenant people, God became their sole savior. Smith writes,

Yahweh is the Israelite covenant God; he alone is Israel’s “deliverer, savior” from their enemies. . . . It strongly denies the thought that there are any other powers that had done anything to influence Israel’s history in a positive way. The implication in earlier passages was that the Egyptian gods cannot help them (31:1-5) and that the Assyrian gods cannot hurt them (36:18-20). Long ago the exodus events illustrated how God acted on behalf of his people and demonstrated his saving ability over enemy forces that were much stronger than the Israelites (Exodus 14-15). If it was true then that Israel’s God was a Savior (*mōšîā* ‘“savior, deliverer”) in the past, is not his saving quality still available for Israel when they are facing new armies and their gods?²⁹

God’s Witnesses Are His Servants to Evangelize the Nations

In Isaiah 43:10, God equates Israel’s (and believers’) call in being his witnesses to being his servants. One of the ways God’s people serve him is by witnessing for him—a witness is a servant. Being a servant and a witness is not an option for those who have been redeemed from sin and slavery. God’s people do not have a choice in respect to being a witness for God. Demonstrating the connection between being God’s witnesses and his servants and why God chose Israel, Oswalt states,

My witnesses . . . my servants. The choice of parallel terms here is significant, because as one expects in synonymous parallelism, the two terms invest each other with meaning. Thus the calling of the servant is made plain: to be living evidence of the unique saviorhood of God. This meaning is further amplified by the following purpose clause. Why were these people chosen? *In order that* they might know by personal experience that the Lord alone is God. It is interesting that it is not said here that they were chosen so that others might know he is God. To do so would get ahead of the process. Others are to know, but only after the people of God

²⁸John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 148.

²⁹Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 203-4.

themselves have come to know him. The knowledge of God is never merely a set of intellectual theorems (like the distance from the earth to the sun) that can be transmitted without teacher or learner ever having proved them by experience. So these servants are called witnesses, and these witnesses are servants: those who know the truth of God because they have entered into bondage to him and in that bondage have learned his character.³⁰

A witness is called to evangelize to the nations. To impact the nations, God's people must exercise their responsibility of being a truthful witness about the salvation experience they encountered with God. In the courtroom setting in Isaiah 43:9, God calls upon Israel to be his witnesses before the nations what he has done for them, which no other god can claim. Being a witness is more about proclaiming the goodness and uniqueness of God. God expects that his track record as Israel's savior and their testimony and allegiance to him will convince the nations that Yahweh is the only savior. Smith, in commenting on Isaiah 43:12, makes the following observation as to why Israel should be God witnesses:

To drive this persuasive point home even further, God declared that he was the one who demonstrated his power and reliability by speaking (about the future) and then "saving" (*hōša 'tî*, same root as in 43:3, 11) his people as he promised he would. . . . No pagan god did this; in fact, God defeated the gods of Egypt (he was proven more powerful) in the process of delivering his people (Exod 12:12). Since Israel experienced these things and knows them from their earlier biblical traditions, they now are able to function in the role of being firsthand eyewitnesses to God's great acts of salvation history (43:12b; 43:10). The telling of their story will only confirm God's real divine qualities.³¹

Being God's Witnesses Is about Confirming His Deity and Verifying His Reality

Israel's salvation experience automatically made them God's witnesses. Israel's own existence is evidence of God being their savior and his sovereignty over the affairs of the nations. For Israel to be a witness to the nations, their job was to testify to

³⁰Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 146.

³¹Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 204.

God's reality. Israel had no excuses in being God's witnesses and their testimony to the nations as Oswalt comments,

12 of the 29 Hebrew words in these three verses are in the first person singular, thus emphasizing monotheism. In a series of dramatic assertions God declares his absolute sovereignty (v.13), his absolute saviorhood (vv. 11-12), and his absolute knowledge of the future (v. 12)—in short, his absolute unlikeness to any other being in the cosmos. He is unlimited and unyielding but also unfailing. Why should Israel doubt that he would either want to or would be able to deliver them? Their whole experience, if they would just learn from it, would tell them otherwise. They are witnesses, whether they want to be or not, to who he really is.³²

God provided indisputable and strong evidence for Israel to have confidence in their ability in being his witnesses. God substantiated his reality by revelation (giving the nations the ability to know him personally) and fulfilling prophecy. Smith summarized Israel's case to the nations in being Yahweh's witnesses and their proof of God's divine distinction:

God presents a strong claim based on the logical fact that there were no divine beings that were formed by craftsman before God. It is also correct to say that no real gods will come to power after the God of Israel; thus none of the idols of the nations are equal or comparable with the God of Israel. This does not imply that God was formed like the wooden idols; it merely indicates that all the idol images that were formed by human craftsmen appeared on the scene long after God's creation and sovereign control of the universe was well established. God does not go on to classify these carved idols that claim to have supernatural powers, but the implication might be that they must be inconsequential and based on false mythology and tradition. If this is so, they cannot really be considered in the same class as Yahweh, Israel's God. Yahweh is unique among all the supernatural beings: (a) because one can know that he lives based on his spoken prediction and the fulfillment of his prophecies, (b) because one can have a real relationship of trust with God, and (3) because no other gods have these qualities.³³

Luke 24:46-48 Provides the Content of the Gospel Message for Witnessing

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:46-48)

³²Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 147.

³³Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 203.

Of the three synoptic gospels (Matt, Mark, and Luke), Matthew 28:18-20 (known as the Great Commission) is perhaps the most recognized passage used in explaining Christ's commissioning of the apostles for making disciples and witnessing. Despite the reasons and the strong case for using Matthew's passage, the gospel of Luke, specifically Luke 24:46-48, provides an equally strong case in explaining how witnesses for Jesus carry out the Great Commission in making disciples by practicing lifestyle evangelism (witnessing). In Luke 24:46-48, Jesus' witnesses are to convey the gospel through two mediums: (1) by means of the Scriptures; and (2) by means of speech (proclamation/preaching).

The Gospel Is to Be Expressed by Means of the Scriptures

It is paramount at the outset to define the term "gospel" because the Bible teaches that a believer cannot effectively witness without sharing the gospel. Equally true is the aspect that one cannot share the gospel apart from Scripture. Paul states that the gospel is a direct revelation from Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12). The gospel is the good news that God provided salvation and the forgiveness of sins by means of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. McKim defines, "Gospel (Greek *euangelion*, 'good news') is the central message of the Christian church to the world, centered on God's provision of salvation for the world in Jesus Christ."³⁴ The Bible, according to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, defines the gospel:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

From 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, one can ascertain that (1) the gospel is to be

³⁴McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. "gospel."

proclaimed (conveyed orally through speech—v. 1, “the gospel I preached”), (2) the gospel provides the means to salvation (v. 2, “by this gospel you are saved”), (3) the gospel and salvation are based upon Jesus Christ’s physical and literal death, burial, and resurrection for the sins of all people (vv. 3-4, “Christ died for our sins . . . that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day”), and (4) the Scriptures authenticate the gospel and God’s plan of salvation (vv. 3-4, “according to the Scriptures”). The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16). It is impossible to be saved without the gospel. The gospel is a message of repentance and forgiveness of sins based upon the atoning work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary. The gospel explains why the Messiah suffered, bled, and died, and why it was necessary for Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to secure eternal life to all who receive him as Savior. Attesting to the importance of the gospel, Erickson states,

To summarize: Paul viewed the gospel as centering upon Jesus Christ and what God has done through him. The essential points of the gospel are Jesus Christ’s status as the Son of God, his genuine humanity, his death for our sins, his burial, resurrection, subsequent appearances and future coming in judgment. It may well be said that, in Paul’s view, Jesus Christ *is* the gospel. In fact, the apostle uses the expression the ‘the gospel of Christ on several occasions (Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Gal. 1:7; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 3:2). . . . Paul sees the essential truths of this gospel message as fulfillments of Old Testament promises (Rom. 1:1-4; 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). . . . To Paul, the gospel is all-important. . . . Convinced that only the gospel can bring salvation along with all its attendant blessings, Paul insists that the gospel is absolute and exclusive. . . . Knowing that the gospel is the only route to salvation, Paul is determined to defend it. . . . Because the gospel has been, is, and will always be the way of salvation, the only way, the church must preserve the gospel at all costs.³⁵

The gospel consists of Jesus’ teaching concerning his death and resurrection, which find their basis in the fulfillment of the Scriptures. The Scriptures explains how and why the Messiah (Christ) was the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of all mankind and through his death Jesus made atonement on our behalf to God. As a result of his atonement, God’s salvation is available to all people.

³⁵Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1063-66.

Next, it is crucial to define and understand the role Scriptures have pertaining to the gospel, salvation, and witnessing. McKim defines Scripture as “writings regarded as sacred. In the Christian tradition, the Old and New Testaments are considered Holy Scripture in that they are, or convey, the self-revelation of God. The term may refer to a single verse or the whole Bible.”³⁶ In the context of Luke 24, prior to verse 46, twice Jesus refers to Scripture concerning himself, giving further insight to himself, the gospel and his death, burial, and resurrection (Luke 24:24-27; Luke 24: 44-45). “Written” in Luke 24:46 refers back to the Old Testament Scriptures, specifically the passages pertaining to the Messiah (Christ). Earlier in Luke 24:27, Luke explains that the phrase “Moses and all the Prophets” was a way of designating all of the Old Testament Scriptures. In explaining the Greek word for “written” in the New Testament. R. K. Harrison states,

The rendering of *graphe*, a Greek term occurring in the NT in the reference to the canonical OT literature. Its plural form denotes the entire collection of such compositions (Matt. 21. 21:42; 1 Cor. 15:3-4), but when used in the singular, *graphe* can mean either a specified passage (Mark 12:10) or the constituent body of writings (Gal. 3:22). . . . The divine author of this material is the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25), and the writings that result of divine revelation and communication to the various biblical authors are said to be inspired (*theopneustos*, 2 Tim. 3:16). Though grammatically passive, this term is dynamic in nature, meaning literally ‘God-breathed’ in an outward rather than an inward direction. God has ‘breathed out’ Scripture as a function of his creative activity, making the revealed word of God authoritative for human salvation and instruction in divine truth.³⁷

Salvation and witnessing are tied to the Scriptures. Scripture represents the written revelation of God; the prophetic record that attests to the veracity and reliability of God. Scripture represents the record of fulfilled prophecy pertaining to the Messiah. Witnessing is impossible without the Scriptures. Witnessing involves God’s Word bearing testimony pertaining to Jesus. In conveying the necessity of the Scriptures

³⁶McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. “scripture.”

³⁷R. K. Harrison, “Scripture,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 991.

pertaining to witnessing, the knowledge of the gospel, knowing God's will pertaining to himself, and salvation, Grudem observes,

The necessity of Scripture may be defined as follows: The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will. . . . In Romans 10:13-17 Paul says: For, "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? . . . So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. This statement indicates the following line of reasoning: (1) It first assumes that one must call upon the name to be saved (In Pauline usage generally as well as in this specific context [see v. 9], "the Lord" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.) (2) People can only call upon the name of Christ if they believe in him (that is, that he is Savior worthy of calling upon and one who will answer those who call). (3) People cannot believe in Christ unless they have heard of him. (4) They cannot hear of Christ unless there is someone to tell them about Christ (a "preacher"). (5) The conclusion is that saving faith comes by hearing (that is, by hearing the gospel message), and this hearing of the gospel message comes about through the preaching of Christ. The implication seems to be that without hearing the preaching of the gospel of Christ, no one can be saved. This passage is one of several that show that eternal salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way. . . . The Bible is necessary for salvation, then, in this sense: one must either read the gospel message in the Bible for oneself, or hear it from another person. Even those believers who came to salvation in the old covenant did so by trusting in the words of God that promised a Savior to come.³⁸

The Gospel Is to Be Expressed through Speech (Proclamation)

Another essential element pertaining to the gospel and witnessing is the proclamation of the gospel through speech.³⁹ The Greek word for "preach" in Luke 24:47, *kerusso*, means "to preach the gospel as a herald."⁴⁰ J. S. Baird writes that to preach is "to speak as a personal witness to God's revelation, interpreting it, explaining it,

³⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 116-18.

³⁹Preaching and proclamation (in this context having the same Greek root word *kerusso*) are synonymous of each other and are used interchangeably in this project.

⁴⁰W. E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1984), s.v. "preach, preaching."

and applying it to the needs of the people.”⁴¹ When believers use the Scriptures to proclaim the gospel in witnessing encounters, they reveal God in the process. McKim defines the act of proclamation as “a term used for Christian preaching as the announcement of the news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁴² In Luke 4:16-21 Jesus uses the Scriptures to announce the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah pertaining to the gospel. In turn, Jesus expects his witnesses (and the church at large) to proclaim the gospel to all people (to the nations). Showing the similarity in the Old and New Testament between proclamation and witnessing, Buckwalter comments in connecting the term “witnesses” from Isaiah’s to Luke’s writings:

Furthermore, in the New Testament the historical reliability of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is intrinsic to the preaching of the gospel. The interrelation between testifying and preaching in the New Testament closely resembles the Old Testament example in Isaiah 43-44. . . . Proclamation in the New Testament means bearing witness to the historical reliability of God’s saving work in Jesus. The authenticity of the message preached is what grants the message its authority. To preach the gospel to the nations is to challenge them with the facts of Jesus (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8).⁴³

Entailed in the proclamation of the gospel are two central elements: repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name. The elements of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name are inseparable to the gospel presentation as the proverbial match of ham and eggs. Green demonstrates how repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name are joined at the hip when he states,

The act of “proclaiming” binds the work of the disciples to that for which Jesus was Spirit-anointed (4:18), while the message “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” corresponds to the word broadcast by John (3:3). “Repentance” will be a key term describing the appropriate response to the offer of salvation in Acts, and connotes the (re)alignment of one’s life—that is, dispositions and behaviors—toward God’s purpose. Forgiveness has been throughout the Gospel and will continue to be in Acts central to the content and experience of salvation. Since these disciples are to

⁴¹J. S. Baird, “Preach, Preaching,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 868.

⁴²McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. “proclamation.”

⁴³Buckwalter, “Testimony,” 768.

continue Jesus' ministry, perhaps it is not surprising that they are to proclaim the salvific message "in his name."⁴⁴

In proclaiming the gospel, Jesus enters Galilee in Mark 1:15 saying, "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news," once again demonstrating a connection between repentance and the gospel. Repentance was consistent in both John the Baptist and Jesus' preaching. McKim defines repentance: "(Greek, *metanoia*) is the act of expressing contrition and penitence for sin. Its linguistic roots point to its theological meaning of a change of mind and life direction as a beginning step of expressing Christian faith (Acts 26:20)."⁴⁵ In explaining how instrumental a role repentance play in the process of salvation, Erickson states,

As we examine this matter of repentance, we cannot avoid being impressed with its importance as a prerequisite for salvation. The large number of verses and the variety of contexts in which repentance is stressed make clear that it is not optional but indispensable. . . . Repentance also had a prominent place in the preaching of Jesus. In fact, it was the opening note of his ministry: "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matt. 4:17).⁴⁶

On the other side of the coin of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, man's greatest need can only be found in Jesus (Acts 4:12; 1 John 1:9). Repentance and forgiveness hinge on each other. Both are necessary for the gospel and salvation. J. K. Grider writes, "For us to receive forgiveness, repentance is necessary (Luke 17:3-4)."⁴⁷ Forgiveness of sins is one of the aspects that make Christianity unique. Grider continues, "No book of religion except the Bible teaches that God completely forgives sin, but there it is frequently taught, for example, 'I will heal their waywardness, I will

⁴⁴Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 857-58.

⁴⁵McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. "repentance."

⁴⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 937.

⁴⁷J. K. Grider, "Forgiveness," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 421.

love them freely (Hos. 14:4 NIV).”⁴⁸ Scripture repeatedly acknowledges that only God can forgive sins (Matt 9:6; Mark 2:7-10; Luke 5:21-24). McKim defines forgiveness: “Forgiveness (Greek, *aphesis*, ‘letting go’) means pardoning or remitting an offense. It restores a good relationship with God, others, or self after sin and alienation.”⁴⁹ The gospel is incomplete without the proclamation of the forgiveness of sin based upon the finished work of Christ at the cross. Without forgiveness of sins, the gospel would fail to be good news. What makes the gospel “good news” is the fact that because of Christ work at the cross, mankind is able to have a right relationship with God and receive the forgiveness of sin in Jesus’ name. Grudem does a great job in summarizing the importance of the forgiveness of sins pertaining to the gospel when he states, “The primary thing that is promised in the gospel message is the promise of forgiveness of sins . . . in Peter’s preaching of the gospel he says, ‘Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out’ (Acts 3:19; cf. 2:38).”⁵⁰ In proceeding to the exposition of Acts 1:8, Jesus continues to explain how the gospel is to be communicated.

Acts 1:8 Provides a Witnessing Strategy for Believers and Local Churches

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). In this verse, Luke expands and expounds from Jesus’ words that he previously wrote in Luke 24:48-49: “You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:48-49).

A key to understanding Jesus’ progressive plan in developing witnesses to

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, s.v. “forgiveness.”

⁵⁰Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 695.

proclaim his name to the nations is to understand how the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, fulfills the Divine agenda. The previous exposition of Luke 24:46-48 explained that the content of the gospel is expressed by means of Scripture and speech. In Acts 1:8, Jesus states that the Holy Spirit is the primary agent who is responsible for expressing the gospel. Grudem confirms this when he asserts,

Among the different activities of the members of the Trinity, what activities are said to be especially the work of God the Holy Spirit? . . . We may define the work of the Holy Spirit as follows: *The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.* . . . The Holy Spirit also empowered Jesus' disciples for various kinds of ministry. Jesus had promised them, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses . . ." (Acts 1:8). There are several specific examples of the Holy Spirit's empowering the early Christians to work miracles as they proclaimed the gospel. . . . But the Holy Spirit also gave great power to the preaching of the early church so that when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit they proclaimed the Word boldly and with great power. . . . In general, we can say that the Holy Spirit speaks through the gospel message as it is effectively proclaimed to people's hearts.⁵¹

In referring back to Luke 24:49, the focus is not necessarily geographic location but being under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit. Instead of dealing with the geographic movement of the gospel (from a concentric circle approach moving outward; i.e., Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth—reaching the nations—a focus on where God's people are to be witnesses), this exposition focuses on how God has equipped his people to be his witnesses. The ability to be God's witnesses is tied to the empowerment and transformation of the Holy Spirit. God has left nothing to chance pertaining to his people's ability to be his witnesses due to empowering them with his very presence. Acts 1:8 provides the paradigm of how the Holy Spirit expresses the gospel by empowering and transforming believers (individually and collectively through local churches) into becoming Jesus' witnesses.

⁵¹Ibid., 634-38.

The Holy Spirit Commissions Jesus' Witnesses

The ability to be a witness is predicated upon having a relationship with Jesus and experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Jesus states to the disciples in both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 that they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that the Father promised he would give to those who believed in his Son (Joel 2:28-29; John 14:15-27; John 15:26-27; John 16:5-15). One of the manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples (and believers as well) is being clothed with power to become effective witnesses for Jesus. Grudem provides an explanation when he defines the Greek word for power used in Acts 1:8:

The word here translated "power" (*dynamis*) occurs nine other times in Acts. In one case (4:33), it is unclear whether this "power" refers to powerful preaching that convicted the hearers or to miraculous signs that accompanied the preaching. But in the other eight examples . . . it refers *to power to work miracles*. This meaning of the term *dynamis* is further confirmed by its frequent use in Luke's gospel to refer to miracle-working power. Therefore when Jesus promised the disciples in Acts 1:8 that they would receive "power" when the Holy Spirit came upon them, it seems likely that they would have understood him to mean at least the power of the Holy Spirit to work miracles that would attest to the truthfulness of the gospel. Because the immediate context of the sentence talks about being witnesses for Jesus, they may also have understood him to mean that they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to work through their preaching and bring conviction of sins and awaken faith in people's hearts. This power in their preaching was evident in subsequent events, as when Peter's hearer's "were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37), or when "many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand" (Acts 4:4).⁵²

The same person who empowered Jesus' life and ministry from birth, death, and resurrection, Jesus promises will now be with them to do even greater works than he himself accomplished (John 14:12-21).⁵³ Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit and power

⁵²Ibid., 638.

⁵³This project was not designed or equipped to deal in detail with this vast theological doctrine. I embrace the teaching found in Grudem's comments on "The Work of the Holy Spirit (b): New Testament." He explains in brief detail the work of the Holy Spirit life in the life of Jesus when he states, "The empowering work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is seen first and most fully in his anointing and empowering of Jesus as Messiah. . . . Jesus had an anointing of the Holy Spirit without measure, and this anointing 'remained on him' (John 1:32; cf. Acts 10:38)." Ibid., 638-9. See also Erickson's comments on "The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus": "When we

was far different from what the disciples expected. The presence of the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples (and all believers) to become effective witnesses and fulfill the Great Commission, unlike what the nation of Israel had failed to do in being Yahweh's witnesses. Building off of Isaiah 43:10 and 44:8, Bruce states how the Holy Spirit's power affected the disciples pertaining to witnessing:

Instead of the political power which had once been the object of their ambitions, a power far greater and nobler would be theirs. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, Jesus assured them, they would be vested with heavenly power—that power by which, in the event, their mighty works were accomplished and their preaching made effective. As Jesus had been anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so his followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on his work. This work would be witness-bearing—a theme which is prominent in the apostolic preaching throughout Acts [1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31]. An Old Testament prophet had called the people of Israel to be God's witnesses in the world (Isaiah 43:10 & 44:8); the task which Israel had not fulfilled was taken on by Jesus, the perfect Servant of the Lord, and shared by him with his disciples. The close relation between God's call to Israel, "you are my witnesses," and the risen Lord's commission to his apostles, "you will be my witnesses," can be appreciated the more if we consider the implications of Paul's quotation of Isaiah 49:6 in Acts 13:47. There the heralds of the gospel are spoken of as a light for the Gentiles, bearing God's salvation "to the end of the earth"; here "the end of the earth" and nothing short of that is to be the limit of the apostolic witness.⁵⁴

As a result of the power of the Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of the disciples (and believers), Jesus' people are empowered to be his witnesses. Acts 1:8 states that the disciples not only received empowerment from the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit transformed them in becoming witnesses.

The Holy Spirit Converts Jesus' Witnesses

The ability to proclaim the gospel is based upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Witnessing requires spiritual conversion and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples earlier in ministry (Matt 10:19-20) that their ability to be his witnesses

examine Jesus' life, we find a pervasive and powerful presence and activity of the Spirit throughout." Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 870-72.

⁵⁴F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 36.

would not be based upon their own capacity, but being endowed by the Spirit given by the Father: “But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matt 10:19-20).

Jesus states emphatically to the disciples in Luke 24:49 (“you are witnesses”) and Acts 1:8 (“you will be my witnesses”) that being his witnesses is a command, not an option. In commenting on Acts 1:8, Pohill explains how Jesus’ commands in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 intertwine:

Jesus promised the disciples two things: power and witness. The future tense here has an imperatival sense: “you will [must] receive power”; “you *will* be my witnesses.” Luke stressed this commission from the risen Lord at the close of his Gospel (Luke 24:47-49). All the same elements are there—the witness, the call to the nations, the power of the Spirit.⁵⁵

The witness factor that makes a difference in comparison to the nation of Israel’s failure in being effective witnesses for the Lord compared to the disciples (and believers, past and present) lies totally in the new relationship the Holy Spirit has with God’s people. This new relationship⁵⁶ enables and empowers the disciples (and believers) to live out a God-honoring, Christ-like life that glorifies God and reflects the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). In explaining the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian, Erickson comments on one of the roles of the Holy Spirit when he says,

The Holy Spirit also works sanctification in the life of the believer. By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the life of the believer actually comes to mirror the standing which he or she already has in God’s sight. . . . This life in the Spirit is what God intends for the Christian. Paul in Galatians 5 contrasts life in the Spirit with the life in the flesh. . . . The work of the Spirit in sanctification, then, is not merely negative work of mortification of the flesh (Rom. 8:13), but also the production of a positive likeness to Christ.⁵⁷

⁵⁵John B. Pohill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 85-86.

⁵⁶This exposition is not designed to discuss the comprehensive nature and doctrine pertaining to the Holy Spirit, especially his personhood and work.

⁵⁷Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 875.

What the law was never able nor designed to do in the sinfulness and weakness of the human flesh (Rom 8:1-17), the Holy Spirit accomplished through the disciples (and all believers). As a result, believers are to witness, not only in speech but also in action by living transformed lives that give their witness for Christ credence and credibility.

Peterson, commenting on Acts 1:8, explains how effective witnessing is lifestyle evangelism, a combination of both sharing one's testimony in Christ in speech as well as living a godly lifestyle:

The second element of the risen Lord's promise is 'you will be my witnesses'. . . finds its closest parallel in Isaiah 43:10. . . . Isaiah envisages that the renewed people of God will be witnesses to the nations of the salvation of God when the new age arrives. Jesus fulfills the divine function of appointing his own witnesses to the nations. . . . In terms of Isaiah 43:10-12; 49:6, Jesus calls the apostles to be the nucleus of the servant community that he will use to bring the message of salvation to Israel and to the Gentiles. Acts then shows how the apostles inform and enable others to be part of that community and to share in the task of bringing others to Christ. In the final analysis, Luke indicates that effective Christian witness involves both a sharing of the apostolic testimony to Jesus and a demonstration of spiritual and *moral transformation arising from personal commitment to the risen Lord*.⁵⁸

⁵⁸David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 111-12.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR BEING A WITNESS AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS A CHURCH

Introduction

One of the primary conclusions derived from the previous chapter is the fact that being Jehovah and Jesus' witnesses is equally about "being" and "doing." Other terms the Bible uses in describing believers pertaining to evangelism (watchman [Ezek 3:17]; fishers of men [Mark 1:17]; ambassadors [2 Cor 5:20]) are all nouns, emphasizing that believers are to focus on who they are in contrast to what activities they perform. Being a witness for Christ is about character transformation that develops believers to become witnesses and a spiritual discipline to be practiced. In using the phrase "lifestyle evangelism," my ambition is to assist believers in prioritizing their focus pertaining to evangelism on the values and the process of transformation versus conducting a spiritual transaction. C. B. Hogue defines lifestyle evangelism as "a life-sharing, life-giving evangelism which includes a verbal life-sharing of what Christ means in a person's heart."¹ There is a distinction between how I am using the term "lifestyle evangelism" (as opposed to "personal evangelism" and my intent to develop members at CrossWay who will practice lifestyle evangelism) versus lifestyle evangelism that is synonymous with relational and incarnational evangelism. Reid provides an accurate description of how I am using the term lifestyle evangelism:

We were created to worship. Out of that context we proclaim the good news of the One we worship so that others can join that movement. Ultimately the goal of growth in Christ in this life is to become a daily, moment-by-moment Christ-follower who shares His gospel not out of compulsion or from an assignment but

¹Delos Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1981), 187.

because it is our very nature. . . . Missional (lifestyle) witness means we witness in the context of our lifestyle with people we know and have a relationship. It is more holistic—unlike knocking on a door of a stranger, being missional means there may be times when you will not talk about Christ explicitly with the other person but are always seeking to demonstrate a changed life. I have neighbors I want to see saved. I do not share Christ every time we have a conversation. In some cases they would never talk to me. I try hard to be a good neighbor and a good friend. The remarkable thing is that by doing this, most of the time the neighbor brings up spiritual matters! My goal is to see all my neighbors saved. In the meantime, I want to be a friend. But friends do not let friends go to hell. . . . Missional (lifestyle) witness means we will build relationships with others who do not know Christ to love them to Him. It means we will appreciate (though sometimes not embrace) their interests and cultural distinctive.²

Evangelism has deviated from the intent of Scripture to the point that witnessing has become a sales presentation (selling Jesus) that results in registering decisions (instead of disciples) for Christ (spiritual transaction). The following statement by McRaney reinforces this negative aspect of evangelism: “It is not enough to get decisions; we ultimately desire to develop disciples. . . . People are complex and deserve more than a UPS delivery approach to hearing about Christ.”³ When Jesus stated to Peter and the disciples that they would become fishers of men, Jesus was modeling lifestyle evangelism. What Scripture does not provide is a detailed guideline or procedure of what being fishers of men entails. Jesus, the apostles, and the writers of the New Testament did not leave any specific, detailed instructions on how to become fishers of men, which is one of the reasons why a plethora of books on evangelism have been written. In order to understand how effective and intentional witnessing (both personally and congregationally) employ various methods to convey the gospel, it is critical to understand the goal of evangelism, what the gospel is, and a proper perspective of witnessing.

The Goal of Evangelism

Scripture is crystal clear as to the ultimate goal of evangelism: to glorify God

²Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional*, (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 283-84.

³Will McRaney, Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 8.

through the expansion of his kingdom in fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48). What is not so clear is the process or the methods that best serves the purpose of evangelism. This can be seen by how evangelism is defined. Defining evangelism is critical because the definition determines the method, processes, and emphasis that evangelism and the church take in meeting its objectives. In addition, one's definition of evangelism also reveals theological beliefs, such as God's sovereignty and human responsibility. It is not my intent (and it is beyond the scope of this project) to address the various views pertaining to the theology of evangelism. The intent is to recognize some of the various definitions that exist pertaining to evangelism. A few notable definitions on evangelism include the Anglican definition, Lewis Drummond definition, and D. T. Niles definition. The Anglican definition is "to evangelize is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their Lord in the fellowship of His Church."⁴ Drummond writes that evangelism is

a concerted effort in the power of the Holy Spirit to confront unbelievers with the truth about Jesus Christ and the claims of our Lord with a view to leading unbelievers into repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and, thus, into fellowship of His church so they may grow in the Spirit.⁵

Niles writes that evangelism is "one beggar telling another where to get food [or bread, as some put it]."⁶ On the surface, these three definitions sound good. Yet upon further examination and investigation, these definitions lack the scriptural integrity that balances God's sovereignty and human responsibility. For example, J. I. Packer (former Anglican

⁴Archbishop's Committee of the Anglican Church, *Reference: Commission on Evangelism* (Westminster: The Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1944), 1, in Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 12.

⁵Lewis A. Drummond, *The Word of the Cross* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 9.

⁶D. T. Niles, *That They May Have Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 96.

minister) in his book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, demonstrates the error in the Anglican's definition when he states that the Anglican's definition "is to define evangelism in terms of an effect achieved in the lives of others; which amounts to saying that the essence of evangelizing is producing converts."⁷ Pertaining to D. T. Niles's definition, Alvin Reid offers praise concerning when he states that it "emphasizes the humility necessary for the believer to have when witnessing."⁸ At the same time, Reid also illustrates a deficiency in this definition: "This definition is weak in that it says nothing about the content of the bread that we share. Taken in its larger context in Niles's book, the definition is stronger; left alone, this comprises an incomplete definition."⁹ The two definitions I selected reflect my biblical and theological beliefs pertaining to my theology of evangelism, God's sovereignty, human responsibility, and the work of salvation (especially the work of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction and conversion). These definitions also address how the church equips and empowers members to take personal responsibility for the work of evangelizing and making disciples. These definitions are also consistent with my biblical and theological basis for being a witness presented in chapter 2.

The following two definitions, along with the commentary thoughts and opinions of their respective authors, reflect categorically my biblical and theological views as well as my position in this project on evangelism (the church responsibility to educate, equip, and empower believers to take personal responsibility in being witnesses with the goal of making disciples, not converts). These definitions, commentaries, and opinions also express the goals and results of evangelism: witnessing is both a spiritual

⁷J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961), 40.

⁸Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 13.

⁹Ibid.

discipline and a way of life, both for the church and the believer. In the first definition by Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ, and Reid's comments, Reid's opinions articulate correctly the biblical goals and results of evangelism. The church and the believers' goal is to faithfully proclaim and share the gospel, leaving and trusting the Holy Spirit to convert and save people. True biblical success is not predicated upon counting converts and numbers. It is being consistent, faithful, and intentional in living a lifestyle of presenting the gospel when and where ever the Holy Spirit creates divine appointments. In the definition from the *Baptist Faith and Message* and LifeWay's commentary, the commentary embodies principles of the three approaches of lifestyle evangelism that this project presents: "Every child of God to *seek constantly*"—intentional evangelism; "to win the lost *by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle*"—relational evangelism; and "by *other methods in harmony* with the gospel of Christ"—servant evangelism. Reid writes,

BILL BRIGHT AND CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST—This group's definition of evangelism is: "Presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God." . . . This simple definition has been liberating for a generation of witnesses. It emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in the witnessing encounter. It also recognizes that our job is to share Christ; God alone converts people. Too many believers fail to witness because they define successful witnessing as harvesting only, yet the New Testament says a great deal about planting and watering as well.¹⁰

This definition of witnessing contains key principles that are presented in the Bible. First, evangelism centers on the person of Jesus Christ because a person cannot be saved apart from him (Acts 4:12). Next, it affirms the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in witnessing by equipping, enabling, and empowering believers in being witnesses (Acts 1:8). The core of this definition reflects the essence of 1 Corinthians 3:6 that balances the believers' responsibility to share Christ (plant and water the seeds through prayer) and the sovereignty

¹⁰Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 14.

of God in producing a harvest since he alone can produce converts. *The Baptist Faith and Message* states,

Article 11 (Evangelism and Missions): “It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man’s spirit by God’s Holy Spirit means birth of love for others. . . . The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.”¹¹

This definition, born out of the Scriptures, epitomizes the balance that exists in witnessing between the believers’ character development and their responsibility in exercising the spiritual discipline of evangelism. Evangelism is not only a command to be obeyed and a service to be performed (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 17:10; Acts 1:8), it is also an official right bestowed upon believers as ambassadors of Christ, commissioned to carry out the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-20). Simultaneously, this definition stresses the principles that believers must be proactive and intentional in seeking to build relationships with people for the purpose of sharing Christ (“endeavor to make disciples”) by combining both the spiritual discipline of evangelism (“win the lost . . . by verbal witness”) and the believers’ character development (“undergirded by a Christian lifestyle”).

What Is the Gospel?

It is important that believers understand the biblical and practical content of the message they are seeking to share. If believers are going to pass it on, it is essential that they see the full meaning of salvation Jesus Christ offers to people. It is essential that every believer have a solid understanding of the gospel message and are able to explain it clearly. Dever states, “Christianity is all about news. It is all about the good news, really the best news the world has ever heard.”¹² The core of evangelism is the message of good

¹¹Charles S. Kelley, Jr., Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2007), 121.

¹²Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway,

news, that through Jesus Christ's death and sacrifice, his burial and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins is available to everyone who repents and places their faith in Christ alone for salvation. There is certainly no ambiguity in the Bible pertaining to what the gospel is and the content of its message. The problem is that there continues to be a drifting away from the truth of the gospel. This problem is not a new or uncommon problem. The apostles contended with this same issue. For example, Paul, in Galatians, warned believers to beware of another or different gospel (which is no gospel) being proclaimed by false brothers (Gal 1:6; also see 2 Cor 11:4). As a result, there exists the need to constantly remind believers what the gospel is not. It is necessary to define what the gospel is NOT because the Bible is clear that a believer cannot effectively witness apart from the gospel. Due to the extensive nature of the term "gospel," for the purpose of this project, the term "gospel" is limited to the definition stated at the end of this section. Too often in evangelism discussions the gospel is assumed or lost in a sea of Christian clichés. Dever states there are misunderstandings about the gospel message. Dever makes an acute and accurate observation of what the gospel is not when he states,

That which passes for the gospel too often becomes a very thin veneer spread lightly over our culture's values, becoming shaped and formed to its contours rather than to the truth about God. The real story, the real message, becomes lost.¹³

In short, Dever wants evangelism to be personal in the Christian life. On the subject of the "Good News," he explains some of the popular misconceptions and poor definitions of what the Good News is. Dever writes, for example, that it is not simply that we are okay, it is not simply that God is love, and it is not simply that Jesus wants to be our friend. He states emphatically that the gospel is about the sin problem that all people have, and what God did through Christ to address the problem. In contrast, Dever clarifies what the gospel is:

2007), 32.

¹³Ibid.

Here's what I understand the good news to be: the good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in His image to know Him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from Him. In His great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law Himself and taking on Himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in Him. Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted His sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. God now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we give our lives back to God by repenting of our sins and trusting in Jesus Christ, we will be born again into a new life, an eternal life with God. This is what the Bible declares is the good news of the gospel.¹⁴

What Witnessing is Not

There are at least three aspects lifestyle evangelism does not represent. First, one of the apprehensions believers state as to why they fear or do not share their faith in Jesus is because they feel that they are imposing their beliefs or opinions onto someone else. This error is due in part to failing to understand what evangelism is and the believer's role in evangelism. Reid makes an observation when he explains what evangelism means and why it is not an imposition of faith:

The basic word for *evangelism* in the New Testament is the term transliterated into the English as "evangel" (noun) or "evangelize" (verb). The verb form is seen several ways. The term *euangelizo* means "I communicate good news." You can see the prefix *eu*, which means "good." . . . The main part of the word *evangelism* contains the English term *angel*, a messenger. So to evangelize is to tell a good message. In the New Testament, the term implies a good message, as in victory. While some people might attempt to make us feel as though evangelism imposes on the privacy of others, let us never forget we are telling the Good News—Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the grave.¹⁵

The objection of sharing one's faith in Jesus imposes their religious beliefs onto someone else, thus violating the other person's religious freedom because religion is a "personal matter" is a misunderstanding of the goal of evangelism. Dever provides a proper perspective of the goal of evangelism and why evangelism, when done properly, is not an imposition or forcing one's ideas on to someone else:

¹⁴Ibid., 43.

¹⁵Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 9.

Probably the most common objection to evangelism today is, “Isn’t it wrong to impose our beliefs on others?” Some people don’t practice evangelism because they feel they are imposing on others. And the way evangelism is often done, I can understand the confusion! But when you understand what the Bible presents as evangelism, it’s really not a matter of imposing your beliefs. It’s important to understand that the message you are sharing is not really an opinion but a fact. That’s why sharing the gospel can’t be called an imposition, any more than a pilot can impose his belief on all his passengers that the runway is here and not there. Additionally, the truths of the gospel are not yours, in the sense that they uniquely pertain to you or your perspective or experience, or in the sense that you are not merely saying, “This is how I see it.” You’re presenting the *Christian* gospel. You didn’t invent it, and you have no authority to alter it. In biblical evangelism, we don’t impose anything. In fact, we really can’t. According to the Bible, evangelism is simply telling the good news. It’s not making sure that the other person responds to it correctly. I wish we could, but according to the Bible, this is not something we can do. According to the Bible, the fruit from evangelism comes from God. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 1 Cor 3:5-7 (NIV)

The Bible presents the human problem as one that can never be solved by coercive force or imposition. Therefore, all I can do is present the good news accurately, live a life of love toward unbelievers, and pray for God to convict them of their sins and give them the gifts of repentance and faith. True biblical, Christian evangelism by its very nature involves no coercion but only proclamation and love. We are to present the free gospel to all; we cannot manipulate anyone to accept it. Biblical Christians know that we can’t coerce anyone into life.¹⁶

Second, evangelism has been misconstrued (in particular the verbal presentation of the gospel) to the point that, in some environments, the wrong results are produced. Witnessing is not about presenting Christ in a similar vein as a salesman making a sales call. Believers are not called to be salesman for Jesus, using a sales pitch and trying to close a deal. In stating that evangelism is not selling, McRaney writes,

I am glad that personal evangelism is a matter of sharing, not a matter of selling. We fall into a trap if we believe that witnessing is about selling a product to make people’s lives better. When people surrender their lives to Christ, there are many benefits as a by-product. We are better served by inviting others into a vital relationship with the Creator of the universe, not by offering another self-help program.¹⁷

¹⁶Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 69-70.

¹⁷McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 61.

Selling and witnessing is not the same thing. Biblical witnessing is not selling Jesus. This misconception of witnessing cheapens and minimizes the impact and influence witnessing has on people's lives and eternal destiny.

This misunderstanding of evangelism segue into the third aspect of what witnessing is not—the results of evangelism. The job of the witness is to make Jesus known. Sharing Jesus is not about how many decisions one obtains. Witnessing is not about results, it is not about decisions—it is about being faithful in sharing the gospel. Dever makes a clear distinction between false results of evangelism (decisions) and the true goal of evangelism (faithfulness) when he asserts,

Finally, one of the most common and dangerous mistakes in evangelism is to misinterpret the results of evangelism—the conversion of unbelievers—for evangelism itself, which is simply telling of the gospel message. This may be the most subtle misunderstanding, yet it is a misunderstanding still. Evangelism must not be confused with its fruit. Now, if you combine this misunderstanding with a misunderstanding of the gospel itself, and of what the Bible teaches about conversion, then it is very possible to end up thinking not only that evangelism is seeing others converted, but thinking that it is within our power to do it! According to the Bible, converting people is not in our power. And evangelism may not be defined in terms of results but only in terms of faithfulness to the message preached. John Stott has said, “To ‘evangelize’ . . . does not mean to win converts . . . but to simply to announce the good news, irrespective of the results.”¹⁸

Dever continues, “When we are involved in a program in which converts are quickly counted, decisions are more likely pressed, and evangelism is gauged by its immediately obvious effect, we are involved in undermining real evangelism and real churches.”¹⁹

Dever adds,

The Christian call to evangelism is not simply a call to persuade people to make decisions, but rather to proclaim to them the good news of salvation in Christ, to call them to repentance, and to give God the glory for regeneration. We do not fail in our evangelism if we faithfully tell the gospel to someone who is not subsequently converted; we fail only if we do not faithfully tell the gospel at all.²⁰

¹⁸Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 78-79.

¹⁹Ibid., 81.

²⁰Ibid., 112.

What Witnessing Is

Within the pages of Holy Writ, the Holy Spirit does not provide a formal definition of witnessing or a job description of a witness. Though God was extremely clear that he expected his redeemed people to be his witnesses, and in the New Testament Jesus, the disciples, and believers are seen performing acts of witnessing. Unfortunately, no one can point to a verse that states what witnessing is. Definitions and descriptions of witnessing have been the work of godly people, composing and synthesizing as best as possible statements that reflect the character and intent of Scripture. The following statements by Rick Warren and Mark Dever's best define and describe the expectation of witnessing and being a witness:

This is the essence of witnessing—simply sharing your personal experiences regarding the Lord. In a courtroom, a witness isn't expected to argue the case, prove the truth, or press for a verdict; that is the job of attorneys. Witnesses simply report what happened to them or what they saw. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses," not "You will be my attorney." He wants you to share your story with others. Sharing your testimony is an essential part of your mission on earth because it is unique. There is no other story like yours, so only you can share it... You may not be a Bible scholar, but you are the authority on your life, and it's hard to argue with personal experience. Actually, your personal testimony is more effective than a sermon, because unbelievers see pastors as professional salesmen, but see you as a "satisfied customer," so they give you more credibility.²¹

Personal evangelism is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making out a good case for the truth of Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying 'Jesus Saves'! Some of these things may be right and good in their place, but none of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Personal evangelism is telling people the wonderful truth about God, the great news about Jesus Christ. When we understand this, then obedience to the call for personal evangelism can become certain and joyful. Understanding this increases personal evangelism as it moves from being a guilt-driven burden to a joyful privilege.²²

²¹Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 290.

²²Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 80, 82.

After defining what witnessing is, it is essential to understand the challenges twenty-first century believers face today in practicing evangelism. Evangelism methods of the past are no longer adequate to reach a new culture and generation of people who have either lost ‘faith’ in the institutional church or who have no exposure to the church. As a result, it becomes necessary to comprehend the reasons why there is a need for a new approach to evangelism. In assisting believers in being witnesses, it is critical to demonstrate that effective and intentional witnessing is not just an event but a lifestyle. One of the approaches discussed along with intentional evangelism is relational evangelism.

Effective and Intentional Witnessing Is Not Just an Event but a Lifestyle

Why the Need for a New Approach to Evangelism

Witnessing involves effectively communicating the gospel with the hope and intent of leading an individual to faith in Jesus Christ. The biblical model for witnessing is the communication of the gospel in such a way that it makes sense to the person receiving the message (clarifying the message and making the gospel make sense—contextualization). The Bible is full of examples on how God communicated to people using human analogies and human language in relation to his message. The best illustration of this is Jesus Christ. When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26), he communicated in relation to her need (water). Similarly, when Jesus asked Peter (a fisherman) to follow him, Jesus spoke to him in terms of his vocation (Matt 4:19—“Come, follow me . . . I will make you fishers of men”).

The gospel (message) is unchanging; the way (method) of communicating the gospel must adapt, adjust, and change according to the background, culture, and language of the target audience. For example, during the 1960s, evangelism strategies consisted of door-to-door visitation, Sunday school, and revival meetings. These methods were

conducive since the institutional church and clergy had a strong influence and credibility in society. During those times, the Judeo-Christian impact permeated the western culture in the United States to such a degree that it would have been difficult to imagine anyone not being affected by the church (Christianity at large). Today, the church can no longer reach people the same way as in the past. White, in commenting on a new generation today, states,

It has been said of Generation X, those born between 1963 and 1977 and the first generation to grow up in a postmodern context, that they lack even the memory of a hope-giving gospel. Today many people outside the church struggle with the concept of Christ's deity. . . . But the challenge before the church runs even deeper. The average person we are trying to reach has gone through what might be called a "great divorce," meaning a separation between spiritual longing and desire and the embrace of a particular religious faith. . . . Today people reject that there even is a way, so the challenge is for the very need of Christianity itself.²³

To understand why the need and reason for a new approach pertaining to evangelism, it is essential to recognize and relate to the new audience; people living in a postmodern context. McRaney explains the challenges and complexities of evangelism in today's changing environment, when he states,

Most of our approaches to proclaiming the gospel are still aimed at the modern scientific, analytical, individualistic mindset. We are ineffective in part because we are building our communication bridge to a mindset and an age that are passing away, or at least being radically transformed. . . . We need to understand and address a new mindset if our proclamation and demonstration of the gospel are to remain relevant and influence the minds and hearts of the next generation. The emerging mindset has been labeled "postmodern." . . . We live in a postmodern context where people are no longer looking to the institutional church for answers to their deep spiritual questions and needs as their grandparents and parents did . . . Just as Jesus depended upon His disciples, the church will become increasingly dependent on members to communicate its message outside the walls of the church. . . . We live in a world where people have radically different ideas of who God is and what He is doing in and around us. People believe what they want to feel good about themselves and will believe whatever it takes to accomplish it. Many people believe something or have good intentions they are OK.²⁴

²³James Emery White, *Rethinking the Church: A Challenge to Creative Redesign in an Age of Transition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 46-47.

²⁴McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 7, 79.

What Does Witnessing Look Like in the Twenty-First Century?

The church, in her desire to fulfill the Great Commission, is forced to re-think how it will carry out its evangelistic mandate. The church must deploy and educate her members into society in a similar fashion as Jesus and the early disciples. It is essential that the church empower believers with effective and relevant ways of reaching unbelievers with the gospel. McRaney describes the dilemma the church faces in reaching people in a postmodern context and the necessity of changing the evangelistic approach, when he writes,

Much of conservative Christianity's evangelism has been built upon one-time encounters and memorized presentations, an approach effective only in a highly homogeneous culture. We must respond to our changed world with fresh, biblical approaches. . . . A question for this generation is not only how we shall live but also, how now shall we evangelize in a postmodern culture?²⁵

Evangelism in the twenty-first century calls for new approaches. Believers' lifestyle must validate the gospel message they present as well as they must comprehend the postmodern mindset. The issue for believers today is to understand the gospel from the unbelievers' point of view and use language that unbelievers can comprehend. Also, believers need to understand that the gap between themselves and unbelievers has increased. McRaney writes,

The postmodern mind-set is that it is an insight attempt to perceive, imagine, and create reality. This is the work of the artist...the complexities of people's spiritual backgrounds will demand that we be more flexible. Personal evangelism of the past was described as making a 'gospel presentation.' This is scientific in its approach. Communicating the gospel message or sharing the gospel story is more artful in its nature.²⁶

McDill believes the rules have changed for witnessing to people who embrace the post-modernist mindset. Since the post-modernist generation does not raise the same objections to the gospel as the previous generation (rational appeals for the existence of

²⁵Ibid., 4.

²⁶Ibid., 112-13.

God, trustworthiness of the Bible, and the fact of Jesus' resurrection), he is convinced that effective evangelism in the twenty-first century must become personal, intentional, and relational in nature. McDill explains the implications for gospel communication necessary for approaching to evangelism pertaining to people who embrace a post-modernist mindset.

Post-modern people are pragmatic and make choices on how well an option meets a need. Evangelism will be more effective if it is need-oriented, connecting God's truth to personal concerns. . . . Secular people need "evangelistic pathways" in the church. They need time to move toward a faith commitment. Evangelistic strategies can include more dialogue, question and answer, short courses, seeker meetings, and especially small groups.²⁷

McDill provides some excellent insight into the thinking process of post-modern people and how believers can be effective in developing relationships with them in order to share Christ. He challenges believers to exercise the character traits that post-modernist find attractive: to be authentic, spontaneous and passionate. His research shows that canned gospel presentations are unattractive and could possibly become a barrier to some unbelievers. He emphasizes to believers that when they have the opportunity to engage in a witnessing conversation with unbelievers, they are to make the conversation dialogical, focusing on appealing to their imagination through storytelling versus conversations that comes off like a speech aimed at reasoning that stresses laws and principles. McDill also cautions believers not to assume that the post-modernist embraces "the Christian view of reality."²⁸

Most evangelism training involves helping people learn how to say the words of the gospel. Little attention is paid to the developing of a biblical mindset of ministry and Christ-like character development that transforms the believer into a witness. Being a witness and witnessing is more about a way of life (being versus doing—the reason for

²⁷Wayne McDill, *Making Friends for Christ: A Practical Approach to Relational Evangelism* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2013), 4, emphasis added.

²⁸Ibid., 4-5.

emphasizing lifestyle evangelism) versus only being concerned about an oral gospel presentation. Biblical witnessing is more than the oral communication of the gospel.

McDill, in a capsule form, captures the essence of biblical witnessing:

In its simplest form this divine strategy can be described in three terms: incarnational, relational and intentional. In more practical terms. . . . God has chosen to communicate with man by being present, in touch, and active. A biblical theology of communication must go beyond the mere announcement of a message in whatever form of technology is used. We see this clearly in God's insistence on the use of human agency to communicate his message. Even when words were communicated, they were always coming through a human agent whose nonverbal communication, whose life context, whose commitment to the message, whose attitude was always a factor in the communication as well. Since Jesus is our model for communication strategy, it is important for us to see how His mission is presented in the Bible. In Jesus of Nazareth God communicated with man as never before. He translated His message into a language mankind could understand, the language of human experience. Jesus was, in an ultimate sense, the Word of God to man. God had spoken once and for all time in an unmistakable way. His message was contained not only in the things said by this Visitor from another world, the message was also in who He was and what He did, His attitudes, and how He related to those around Him. His communication strategy then informs ours.²⁹

Based upon research, the nucleus of this project focuses on the three approaches essential for biblical witnessing: lifestyle evangelism that emphasizes being relational, intentional, and servanthood. Lifestyle evangelism is not predicated on a canned or script presentation of the gospel; it is not a program method but a philosophical mindset that influences and permeates the total being of the believer. I am convinced that lifestyle evangelism that embodies the three approaches of being relational, intentional, and servanthood present an effective and viable strategy for witnessing in the twenty-first century.

Relational Evangelism

For evangelism to be effective, it behooves the church and believers to move themselves into the unbelieving world. McDill states, "Christians tend to isolate themselves from association with unbelievers. . . . If we are to influence unbelievers, we

²⁹Ibid., 8.

will have to cultivate those relationships intentionally.”³⁰ This first approach, relational (also known as incarnational or lifestyle) evangelism, is focused on spreading the gospel through relational networks. McDill defines relational evangelism: “Incarnational evangelism is also relational. It involves an interaction between human beings in such a way that more is communicated than the words themselves.”³¹ “This approach to evangelism has also been called ‘lifestyle evangelism.’”³² Aldrich, another advocate who uses the term lifestyle evangelism, writes,

Evangelism is a way of living beautifully and opening one’s web of relationships to include the nonbeliever. A person is exposed to both the music and the words of the gospel. . . . To be effective in evangelism, we must practice the art of influencing the unsaved in accord with the aesthetic sense with which God has endowed his creatures. They respond to beauty! . . . *Beauty is the possession and nature of God.* . . . Evangelism is *expressing* what I possess in Christ and *explaining* how I came to possess it. . . . Therefore evangelism is not a special activity to be undertaken at a prescribed time. It is the constant and spontaneous outflow of our individual and corporate experience of Christ. Even more specifically, evangelism is what Christ does through the activity of his children as they are involved in 1) proclamation, 2) fellowship, and 3) service.³³

Biblical precedence for this method is based upon John 1:14, John 1:35-41, John 1:43-46, Acts 10:23-24, Titus 2:14, and 1 Peter 3:15. Thompson, in providing biblical evidence for this method, writes,

In the New Testament church, the gospel always moved on lines of relationship—to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth—in waves that seemed to move outwardly. The gospel of Jesus Christ began to spread through relationships in ever-growing circles. If something is genuine in my life and your life, the natural thing to want to do is to share it with those we know.³⁴

³⁰Ibid., 22.

³¹Ibid., 12.

³²Ibid., 137.

³³Joe Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1993), 27-29.

³⁴W. Oscar Thompson, Jr., and Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 16.

This approach to evangelism has many advocates that cross various theological viewpoints. For the purpose of this project, I will provide research from proponents whose evangelistic viewpoints are consistent with my own. Also, due to the constraints and scope of this project, the discussion is confined to providing a general overview and strengths of the relational, intentional and servant approaches. These approaches recognize the use of personal testimony and the presentation of the gospel. Another aspect of these approaches is the emphasis of engaging and allowing the individual to talk, listening to their story, and asking questions. Instead of canned, memorized gospel presentations, most of these proponents promote communicating the gospel through diagram, illustration, and story. Also, these forms of evangelism require time for them to develop with the hope of producing fruit. These advocates are quick to state that one of the misconceptions some people have about evangelism is the aspect of quick producing fruit (results). Sjogren emphasizes,

We need to allow time for deeds and words of love to have their effect on the hearts of people. If we are allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work in His way and in His timing, we must not demand instantaneous results. We can be assured that God will not allow any seed He has sown to come back without bearing fruit (see Isa. 55:11), but He typically works over a prolonged period of time to bring sinners to Himself. As we allow adequate time for seeds of love to take root, we put the expectation for results on the right spot: the Holy Spirit.³⁵

Paige Patterson lists concerns for why advocates of lifestyle evangelism believe that some approaches to evangelism must change.

The widespread failure of “converts” to become “disciples.” Many “decisions” appear either to be uninformed or designed to terminate an encounter with an embarrassing evangelist by whatever means necessary—even recording an insincere decision.

The tendency for those gifted in evangelism to enjoy success while the majority of Christians nurse a growing guilt and frustration over their inadequacies in sharing the gospel.

The predominance of the use of gimmicks and memorized approaches which are notoriously impersonal and subject to abuse. Legalism is often the result.

³⁵Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 25.

Rejection of the gospel engendered by belligerent and insensitive approaches in which the sharer never attempts to comprehend the culture or circumstances of the recipient.

Shirking of full responsibility for incarnational Christian responsiveness to the total person in exchange for a hit-and-run technique of discharging one's witness.

Improper development of spiritual gifts in the body-life of the church, preventing the whole body from functioning properly.³⁶

One of the cases for relational evangelism is the expression of the practical relationship of the gospel with the lifestyle of the believer. To the unbeliever, validation of the gospel will be evident in the believer's life, as the saying goes, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Intentional Evangelism

Witnessing encounters do not happen by accident. Witnessing requires believers putting other people needs before their own (Phil 2:3-4). McRaney writes,

Our natural desires are to pursue selfish ambitions and personal comforts. We do not live in a society that places a high value on community concerns. We have elevated individualism to our own detriment. We no longer live in an environment where people walk many of the places they travel. People are on the move most all the time. Trying to connect with people is not an easy thing to do. Maintaining a connection is even harder. . . . Christians will intentionally have to engage those who are presently outside the family of God. We have to go to them, not wait for them to come to us. The Christian message has the church going into the world of lost people from which we also came.³⁷

Apart from divine appointments where the Holy Spirit draws people to Christ, witnessing requires believers to be proactive by taking the initiative to engage people in spiritual conversations. "Initiative," defined by *The Random House College Dictionary*, is an "introductory act or step; leading action: readiness and ability in initiating; one's personal, responsible decision." "Intentional," defined by *The Random House College*

³⁶Paige Patterson, "Lifestyle Evangelism," in *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century—The Critical Issues: Twenty-One Contributors Writing in Honor of Lewis A. Drummond*, ed. Thom S. Rainer (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1989), 42-43.

³⁷McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 65.

Dictionary, is something “done deliberately or on purpose.” McDill defines intentional evangelism: “Evangelism that is intentional simply means that we (believers) are to take the initiative to plan and act to bring our neighbors to Christ.”³⁸ The Bible contains many examples of intentional evangelism. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus commissions the disciples (and all believers) to “go and make disciples of all nations,” implies that believers take the initiative to engage people with the gospel with the intention of making disciples for Christ. In the book of Acts, Scripture provides evidence of the believers taking the introductory first step in engaging people with the gospel of Jesus Christ: Acts 3:1-10, 8:26-40, and 16:11-15. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, the aspect of planting and watering the seed involves individuals taking the initiative in the evangelism process. The NIV translation of Philemon 1:6, Paul writes and encourages Philemon “to be active in sharing your faith.”

One of the greatest challenges pertaining to evangelism, especially personal evangelism, is the necessity of being biblical. McRaney states, “We need to be intentionally and appropriately aggressive in sharing the gospel (Col. 4:3).”³⁹ In sharing Christ, believers must evangelize from the depth of spiritual resources available to them. In commenting on the need for being intentional in exercising spiritual discipline pertaining to evangelism, Reid writes, “It is true that evangelism is a natural result of a passionate life transformed by the gospel. But we must not witness only when opportunities jump into our laps. We must look for times and places to share the gospel.”⁴⁰ Reid continues,

We must be intentional. Think about the things that happen if you are not intentional. If you are not intentional in your diet, at some point in life you will get

³⁸McDill, *Making Friends for Christ*, 13.

³⁹McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 72.

⁴⁰Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 132.

fat. If you are not intentional in watering house-plants, they will die. So much in life requires intentionality.⁴¹

Intentional witnessing does not just “happen.” It requires planning, effort, and a deliberate decision of the will to pursue it. Like making a cake or building a building—it does not just happen from chaos or chance. An excellent resource on intentional evangelism is Bill Hybels’ book, *Just Walk across the Room*.⁴² Listed next are six key points from the book. Intentional witnessing means (1) taking the initiative—walking in the footsteps of Jesus and acting in love. Love takes the initiative—the first steps.⁴³ (2) Taking the initiative to build and develop relationships (friendships)—walk across the room (take the initiative). This is one of the major reasons why believers must be intentional in witnessing and building relationships.⁴⁴ Hybels states,

The longer a person attends church, the fewer evangelistic discussions they engage in with family members and friends. Fewer presentations of the life changing plan of salvation are given, and fewer invitations to events that attractively present the message of Christ are offered, mostly because Christ-followers have fewer friends outside the faith to whom to offer them.⁴⁵

(3) Being intentional in praying for people and their salvation. Hybels provides a good example of a prayer for intentional witnessing:

My life is in your hands, God. Use me to point someone toward you today—I promise to cooperate in any way I can. If you want me to say a word for you today, I’ll do that. If you want me to keep quiet but demonstrate love and servanthood, by your Spirit’s power I will. I’m fully available to you today, so guide me by your Spirit.⁴⁶

⁴¹Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 231.

⁴²Bill Hybels, *Just Walk across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 1-221.

⁴³Ibid., 22-24.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 61.

⁴⁶Ibid., 37.

(4) Being intentional in inviting people to church.⁴⁷ (5) Being intentional sometimes require leaving one's comfort zone.⁴⁸ (6) Being intentional involves taking risks.⁴⁹

One of the challenges of witnessing is achieving biblical balance. Up to this juncture in the project, significant amount of weight has been given to glorifying God by fulfilling the Great Commission in order to make disciples. To balance the scale of biblical evangelism, it is essential that believers also glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (John 13:34-35) simultaneously. Jesus' Great Commandment of John 13:34-35 would enable the world to know without a shadow of doubt that believers are truly Jesus' disciples by their demonstration of love for one another. Biblical love always manifests itself by its actions (Rom 5:8). The last approach this project scans (servant evangelism) reflects the other half of biblically balanced evangelism. Servant evangelism validates the oral presentation of the message by incarnating the gospel through deeds. By speaking through physical human language that people can see, feel, and touch, unbelievers can actually see evidence of the love of God through believers.

**Evangelistic Strategy that Combines the Oral Communication
of the Gospel through a Distinctive Lifestyle
that Includes Acts of Kindness**

Servant Evangelism

The concept of servant evangelism is demonstrated in the New Testament and the life of Christ. Jesus exemplified being a witness by modeling lifestyle and servant evangelism. He connected a powerful oral proclamation of the gospel with a ministry of compassionate and kind acts of service. One of the biblical passages that speaks strongly for servant evangelism is Mark 10:42-45. An aspect of being a witness and evangelizing

⁴⁷Ibid., 35-54.

⁴⁸Ibid., 22-23.

⁴⁹Ibid., 89-91.

is the call that all believers have in being a servant of God by serving people. Just like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (thereby providing them an example to model), in a similar fashion believers are to emulate Christ by serving a dying and hurting world. Such service authenticates the gospel message and reflects positively the Christian faith. Sjogren and Reid provide excellent definitions of servant evangelism. Steve Sjogren is responsible for the phrase servant evangelism. Sjogren pastored and planted churches (including the megachurch, Cincinnati Vineyard Church) based upon the servant evangelism approach. Sjogren defines servant evangelism: “Servant evangelism is demonstrating the kindness of God by offering to do some act of humble service with no strings attached.”⁵⁰ He continues,

Servant evangelism is one method, not the only method, nor necessarily the best one for every situation. And like any other approach, it simply doesn’t work apart from the agency of the Holy Spirit who is the only true evangelist. Its effectiveness may vary from one cultural setting to another and there may well come a time when it has outlived its usefulness. Nevertheless, in a society where other forms of sharing the gospel often meet a great deal of resistance—one that feels it’s heard too much “God talk” and not seen enough “God activity”—servant evangelism seems to be a fruitful way for Christians to share God’s love with their community. Our experience . . . showed us that evangelism must contain the right words, but that those words must *follow* the demonstration of the love of God. The following equation states how this approach works: *Servant evangelism = deeds of love + words of love + adequate time.*⁵¹

Reid’s definition, though very similar in concept, adds the elements of being intentional and personal evangelism: “Servant evangelism is a combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism. . . . It involves intentionally sharing Christ by consistently modeling biblical servanthood.”⁵² Reid also writes,

Servanthood evangelism is not new. Churches have used it for generations. However, the concept is critical for our day for two reasons: first, it fits our times—it is a powerful medium for reaching our contemporary, post-Christian culture.

⁵⁰Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, 18.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 23.

⁵²Reid, *Evangelism Handbook*, 276.

Second, we are seeing more and more churches whose entire ministry is built on this concept reaching people for Christ. Servanthood evangelism will head believers in a direction of greater excitement and commitment for evangelism. Simple acts of kindness and intentional evangelism fit well together. Like so many profound truths, this one is so simple it is easily missed. These acts of kindness open the door for the greatest act of kindness a Christian can give the gospel.⁵³

In re-thinking the process of evangelism, acts of service are just as “spiritual” as acts of proclaiming/sharing the gospel. In some evangelical circles, emphasis on the Great Commission without balancing the Great Commandment has inhibited some believers for practicing servant evangelism outside the walls of their homes and churches. McRaney stresses this same sentiment:

It is a trap to equate faithfulness to God with faithful attendance at all the activities of the church. Most church systems use their most mature and faithful church members to do church work rather than do ministry outside the building. Churches need systems that elevate the roles people play in the lives of lost people by honoring evangelists and supporting their efforts. Coaching a Little League team may be the most spiritual activity in a Christian man’s week. Participating in a PTO may be of great service to the kingdom in a mother’s week.⁵⁴

Servant evangelism, when done properly with a right attitude and intent, can become the springboard for opening the door for sharing the gospel. For example, relational and servant evangelism work well together. In teaching believers how to develop relationships with people for the purpose of sharing Christ, acts of kindness such as helping a neighbor in need (giving a cup of sugar) or seeing a stranger in distress (needing assistance in fixing a flat tire) can open the door for establishing dialogue. Listed next, Reid provides several strengths of servant evangelism that can assist believers in witnessing and a word of caution in practicing servant evangelism.

STRENGTHS OF SERVANTHOOD EVANGELISM

In a post-Christian culture, servanthood evangelism offers a demonstration of the gospel coupled with an explanation. A simple deed of kindness helps to build rapport with people like this. Sjogren has noted that servanthood evangelism is heart-to-heart witnessing versus head-to-head.

⁵³Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 210.

⁵⁴McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 199-200.

Servanthood evangelism sometimes is personal evangelism in a corporate setting. Servant evangelism often involves a whole group washing cars, offering sodas at a park, etc.

Servanthood evangelism is low risk.

Servanthood evangelism can be an essential part of the church's mission.

Servanthood evangelism can be made to be fun!

Servanthood evangelism involves everyone in witnessing.

Servanthood evangelism follows the model of Jesus: preaching, teaching and healing.

Servanthood evangelism allows laypeople to use their own creative minds to initiate ministry opportunities.

Servanthood evangelism requires few resources and can be done anywhere in any setting.

Servanthood evangelism is warm and friendly.

CAUTIONS ABOUT SERVANTHOOD EVANGELISM

Anything with the potential for good also has the possibility for harm. Three cautions must be expressed about servanthood evangelism:

1. *We must be intentionally evangelistic.* Our evangelism must be biblical, for the legacy of liberalism is its emphasis on meeting social and physical needs without including the power of the gospel.
2. *We must care about people.* Unless we have compassion such as Jesus displayed (see Matthew 9:35-38), servanthood evangelism is a gimmick. We cannot limit our acts of kindness only to those who will let us talk.
3. *We must be prepared and equipped to share the gospel, if the opportunity occurs.*⁵⁵

Effective and Healthy Churches that Thrive in the Area of Evangelism and Discipleship Create an Atmosphere and Culture that Employs Similar Biblical Characteristics

Establishing and Encouraging an Evangelistic Environment

The mission of the church to a lost and dying world is to glorify God by communicating to the world the love of God (Rom 5:8). The way the church, individually and collectively, accomplishes this task is by sharing the gospel, the good news of the forgiveness of sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ. The church is in an era

⁵⁵Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 212-14.

where unbelievers are looking less toward the church for spiritual answers they need for life. The church's primary place of ministry concerning evangelism is externally in the world beyond the physical structure. Since unbelievers are not breaking down the doors of the church, believers must go to them, according to Matthew 28:18-20, to communicate the gospel in a way that is attractive and personal. To accomplish this task, believers must be able to communicate the gospel in a language and style that is relevant to the present culture. The growth of the body of Christ through evangelism will have its greatest impact through personal evangelism.

The communication of the gospel entails more than the dissemination of information. The church should concentrate on training believers in sharing their testimony and faith by assisting them in overcoming their fear in witnessing. Evangelism is essential to the church because the church will cease to exist without evangelism. Further, God's plan to reach the world is through local congregations. Some people have forgotten that the local church is God's plan to reach the world. The most effective means of evangelism is personal. Personal evangelism is a multifaceted process that requires discipline (studying, memorization and meditation of the Scriptures), prayer, dependency on the Holy Spirit, the cultivation of a lifestyle and character that reflects the life of Christ and a commitment to sharing one's testimony of the work of Christ in their life. Believers need to know how to share the gospel with unbelievers by being sensitive, but not to the point of compromising the gospel.

It is essential for churches to provide an atmosphere that causes evangelism to flourish among believers. Stetzer and Dodson documented principles of churches that exhibited effective intentional strategies:

Principle #1 The greatest motivation for evangelism is our own relationship with God, compelling us to love those He loves. Comeback pastors are able to cast a compelling vision for outreach that is shared by the leadership and then the congregation. . . . People will not engage in evangelism until they have a vision to do so. . . . If you are like 97 percent of other people, it was through an existing relationship—a friend, an associate, a relative, or a neighbor. Using existing bridges

of credibility and trust with unbelievers is the most effective way to reach those without Christ.

Principle #2: In order to train people to “go and tell,” we will need to teach them to live like Jesus—to live like a messenger of God in this world. . . . We go as “ambassadors” not diplomats. Diplomats usually represent a country in an effort to negotiate a deal. Ambassadors represent a sovereign power with the message.

Principle #5: Comeback churches know that the whole church has to embrace the mandate for evangelism. Everyone can be involved as a prayer, bringer, and/or teller, and should be trained and mobilized in one or more of these areas.

Principle #6: Comeback churches said that creating an environment which spontaneous and planned evangelism can take place is a key . . . being intentional and moving outward cannot be overemphasized! . . . Prayer was mentioned frequently as a part of an effective strategy in the evangelistic efforts of comeback churches. Prayer is not “all we can do” when it comes to evangelism. Prayer is the best thing we can do!⁵⁶

Advocates of relational, intentional, and servant evangelism attest that their research and evidence show that their approaches work best when they are supported within the small group ministry of a local church. Instead of the churches’ worship services being the entry way to foster relationships that promote evangelism, small group classes are the key in providing a safe and welcome environment for unbelievers. McDill writes, “If relational evangelism works, relationships among believers must be strong and engaging. . . . The best way to experience this mutual support is through small groups. Churches around the world have proven the vitality of a small group ministry.”⁵⁷ Listed next are several qualities McDill recommends for churches that are conducive for relational evangelism.

Relational evangelism will work best in a church where the Christian life is understood in relational terms.

Relational evangelism will work best in a church where the fellowship is supportive and caring.

Relational evangelism will work best in a church where lay ministry is encouraged.

⁵⁶Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 100-107.

⁵⁷McDill, *Making Friends for Christ*, 143.

Relational evangelism will work best where the philosophy of ministry centers in servanthood.

Relational evangelism will work best where outsiders are warmly received with sincere interest in them.⁵⁸

Pippert shares another example of how small groups provide the optimal environment for lifestyle evangelism:

One pastor told me his church spent hundreds of hours training members on exactly what to say as they went door to door sharing. Three years later, after a tremendous amount of time and effort, only one person who claimed to become a Christian was still walking with God. He said the reason was that the Christian who came to his door cultivated a genuine friendship with him and invited him to meet his network of Christian friends.

The pastor was so struck by this that his congregation began focusing on building strong small group neighborhood Bible studies. He provided Bible study and small group training and encouraged them to reach out to their non-Christian neighbors. For the first time the members of his church began to trust each other, love each other and become truly involved in each other's lives. Then when they formed friendships with non-Christians in their neighborhood, they genuinely wanted them to meet their friends in the Bible study. Soon the Bible study members were bringing their non-Christian friends to their group and eventually to their church. The pastor told me that for the first time during his ministry there real evangelism was going on in his church.

Most "contact" evangelism techniques are severely limited by the fact that nonbelievers never see the gospel fleshed out in the believer's life. One of the greatest gifts (and evidence) that we give is the chance to see how Jesus lives his life through us. And the demonstration of his love, his holiness and his charity is far more powerful in a community of believers than in any individual. Strangers, so long as they remain strangers, only hear a message and never see it lived out in human relationships.

Another limit to contact evangelism is that the very style itself is usually associated with salesmanship. Jesus thus appears simply as another product on the religious market. . . . I am not saying there is no place for contact evangelism. But I am saying that by far the most effective, the most costly and even perhaps the most biblical kind of evangelism is found in the person or groups who look at people around them, those with whom their own life naturally intersects and then begin to cultivate friendships and to love them. When churches start to reach out to their neighborhoods through small groups, the impact can be overwhelming.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Ibid., 139-41.

⁵⁹Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 172-74.

It is emphatic for churches to foster environments conducive to evangelism. Mobilizing believers who are active in sharing their faith is key. Reid states, “Personal evangelism is the single most effective way to reach the world for Christ.”⁶⁰ Reid continues, “It is essential that we recapture a commitment to aggressive, winsome, unashamed personal evangelism!”⁶¹

Conclusion

Despite the various methods of evangelism, they all share a common goal—the desire to glorify God by being obedient to the Great Commission. The most important ingredient in any evangelism effort is obedience to God to do the work of evangelism. No one approach is superior to another. McRaney echoes these sentiments:

As America moves toward a postmodern culture, evangelism training will have to move more toward a first-century model. I am convinced that God has not prescribed a specific method for sharing one’s faith or a specific method for training. However, because our culture is more like the first century than the culture of the 1950’s, we must adapt our training. When in doubt, do what Jesus did: He modeled ministry and personal relations. He shared truth with people. He gathered the disciples and worked to instill His heart and His values into them. . . . Personal evangelism does involve X’s and O’s, yet it involves much more if we are to be effective in our efforts to communicate effectively. Do not look for easy training methods; they do not exist. . . . Training involves the head, the hands, and the heart. We need to put some essential information in our heads as we prepare to share our faith. Different types of witnessing encounters require various levels of information. Evangelism also calls for the development of skills (listening skills) as we put our hands to the task of personal evangelism. However, the most important part of personal evangelism involves the heart, not what we know or the skills we develop.⁶²

This project does not intend to disparage other approaches to evangelism. There are different techniques and presentation styles for presenting the gospel. The design of this project is not to evaluate and make critical judgments; the goal is to discern a paradigm or system that best represents and reflects the biblical teaching pertaining to evangelism. As

⁶⁰Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism*, 16.

⁶¹Ibid., 46.

⁶²McRaney, *The Art of Personal Evangelism*, 225-27.

stated previously, the issue is to recognize that the church must re-think its evangelism strategy to reach unbelievers in the twenty-first century who embrace a post-modern mindset. This project's quest was to research evangelistic approaches that are sensitive to unbelievers. Unbelievers do not like to feel that they are being used only for the purposes of a gospel presentation, a church's statistic, a decision, or another number for the church's attendance and that giving can be increased. The goal of any evangelistic approach is to make unbelievers experience unconditional love regardless if they make a decision for Christ or not.

The primary purpose of this project is for believers to understand that the "Great Commission" is not the job of the professional but it is the work of every believer. It is not a suggestion but a command. The mandate of Matthew 28:18-20 is for each individual believer, not just for "paid" professionals. Developing believers who practice lifestyle evangelism is the most effective method to reach the world with the gospel message. Therefore the primary place of church ministry is outside the building. A believer's spiritual life leads naturally to a passion for God and thus a passion for the things that matter to God. In the end, for believers to become effective in sharing the gospel (and practice personal evangelism), a desire to love Jesus and love people is required.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING MEMBERS WHO PRACTICE LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM: FIFTEEN-WEEK PROJECT EXECUTION DETAILS

This project, over the course of fifteen weeks, contained three different components. The first component consisted of preaching a series of sermons for twelve consecutive weeks. I preached a sermon series entitled “Be My Witness” on Sunday morning during CrossWay’s regular worship service. I used the title of the sermon series as an acrostic for each week’s message. This component took place from week 1 through week 13. The primary resource for sermon preparations was Daniel Meyer’s *Witness Essentials: Evangelism that Makes Disciples*.

The second component was to develop a seminar that equipped members to cultivate intentional relationships with people with the express purpose of practicing lifestyle evangelism. The seminar’s main instrument entailed a seminar guide entitled “Personal Evangelism Seminar Guide.” The creation of this personal evangelism seminar guide took place from week 1 through week 13.

The final component comprised of implementing the seminar that educated and equipped CrossWay members to practice lifestyle evangelism. The venue for this seminar was a small group setting to consist of four, ninety minutes sessions. The seminar was conducted over a three-day weekend. The seminar was held at a Christian-based retreat facility during week 14.

Twelve-Week Sermon Series: “Be My Witness”

The exposition of the Word of God during Sunday morning services (compared to small group class) represents the primary venue and greatest attendance for education,

equipping, and exhortation for believers at CrossWay. It is critical to instill into the believers at CrossWay what it means to exhibit Christ in witnessing. The overarching goal of this sermon series was to assist believers to understand and practice their responsibility to God as his witnesses. To achieve this goal, it was paramount for believers to apprehend three things: (1) comprehend the implications and the meaning of the good news of the gospel, (2) make personal evangelism a habitual part of their way of life in a desirable and God-honoring fashion, and (3) be empowered by the life transformation through Christ that serves as a catalyst to encourage others for the glory of God. I began preaching the sermon series at the beginning of week 2. Also during week 2, prior to the first message, I asked believers to participate in a Pre-Project Survey for the “Be My Witness” Sermon Series. One of the purposes of this survey was to evaluate believers’ mindset towards evangelism. Another purpose was to determine the effect and influence (if any) that the exposition of the biblical messages (in this case, on Sunday mornings only) would result in attitude and life transformation. The series ended at week 13. Ending the sermon series at week 13 allowed the opportunity to transition from the sermon series to the personal evangelism seminar without a break, which ensured a consistent momentum and train of thought pertaining to evangelism. In addition, starting the sermon series on week 2 allowed me to have a week in advance (in this case week 1) for sermon preparations. Each sermon was prepared a week in advance. In the following brief paragraphs, I provide the sermon title, Scripture text, the purpose of the message, and the challenge to obedience issued to believers in response to the Word of God.

Sermon 1: “Believe in the Call and Power of God” (Acts 1:8)

What is the life-changing call and promise that Jesus gives to his disciples? No less than the first disciples, believers are called by Jesus and empowered by his Spirit to play a personally active role in the ultimately unstoppable expansion of Christ’s life-redeeming influence, until that coming day when God completes the renewal of his

creation. There is no vocation more significant and satisfying than being a witness to the transformational love of Jesus Christ. The last words that people speak are often very significant. On the last day of his earthly ministry, Jesus issued a specific charge and promise to his disciples concerning the role they would play in his ongoing work in the world. These words are of profound significance to all believers who seek to follow Christ today. The goal of the first message was to look at the Bible's original use of the word "witnesses" from Isaiah 43:10-12, Isaiah 44:8, and Acts 1:8. These passages of Scripture helped believers understand God's compelling command and promise He gives to His people. Seeing what God has done in the past and promised for the future keeps believers from being discouraged when the work of witnessing becomes a challenge.

**Sermon 2: "Examine the News"
(Rom 1:16)**

What is the gospel to which believers are called to bear witness? Believers are called to proclaim the good news of Christ's life-giving victory over the sinful separation from God that disfigures human character, blinds people to truth, and leaves them without reliable power to overcome the brokenness of creation, the darkness of death, and the limits of human love.

To understand how good the good news really is, this message compared the good news to humanity crisis, which is bad news. The goal was to paint a picture of the bad news before explaining the good news. As a means of an illustration, I held up a newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other. As I read the newspaper, reading some of the crimes that had taken place and the obituary of people who had died, I contrasted the good news of forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus Christ. This message was designed to challenge believers that they possess and must tell the best news the world will ever hear. Gospel is a term whose meaning is often not grasped, even by those who have been around a church for a very long time. What is the gospel to which believers are called to bear witness? Believers are called to proclaim the good news of Christ's life-

giving victory over the sinful separation from God that disfigures human character, blinds people to truth, and leaves them without reliable power to overcome the brokenness of creation, the darkness of death, and the limits of human love. This gospel is God's wonderful invitation to be saved from sin for a beautiful new life through him.

Sermon 3: "Mourn the Changed Conditions" (Isa 40:8)

What is the condition of the world and society believers are living in today? When a person looks out at society today and sees how sin has wreaked havoc across human relationships, civil and government institutions, it is understandable for them to become discouraged. The Old Testament prophets repeatedly warned the Israelites of God's coming judgment on them for their faithlessness. In Isaiah 40, the prophet proclaims comfort to his mourning people and the promise that God is about to do something new. As public support for Christians died out, many Christians entered into a grieving process that made it even more difficult to bear witness constructively. Understandable though this might be, it is now time to accept this death and move on. The good news is that the present conditions offer believers a marvelous opportunity to recover the character of the Christian faith. Believers are to comfort others by assisting them to find lasting solutions to their problems and needs from God's eternal and unfailing Word.

Sermon 4: "Yearn for People as God Does" (Luke 19:10)

What kind of heart do believers need to have as Christ's witnesses? God wants believers to be dramatically different from the representatives of religion (especially the Pharisees) who had increased the resistance of many to the claims of the true faith. God calls believers to be filled with his good heart toward people, to yearn relentlessly to see lost people found by his love, and to help others discover the multiple blessings that a relationship with his son Jesus can give. This message examined the yearning heart that Jesus displayed toward the lost (unbelievers). In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables of

things that were lost: sheep, coin, and a son. In each parable, the concern was not for the items that were safe, but for the items that were lost. Once the item was found, joy was restored to the community. In a similar fashion, Jesus urges his followers to be intentional, searching and patient in seeking after those who are lost and outside of God. Believers must build an environment that demonstrates that they care for people as they are. Believers must clarify who Jesus cares for and desires. Believers sometimes get so consumed about being a holy huddle that they lose focus of lost people. The goal of this message was to help believers develop a heart for the lost, like Jesus who came to seek and save the lost.

Sermon 5: “Walk with People” (Luke 10:2)

How do believers begin to exercise their ministry as Christian witnesses? In following Jesus, believers move from the foundational communion with God into the mission field of an ill and injured lost world. By focusing on building redemptive relationships, believers invest substantial time in people, express authentic affection for them, and gaze with both compassion and humility upon the damage done by sin to human health. These genuine friendships create the indispensable context for further influence of the gospel.

For many Christians, the spiritual life is thought of in terms of what happens in church, in their private devotional life, or in the context of how they manage their household. In this passage believers look at where Jesus places his focus for proclamation of the gospel message and the urgency he feels for this direction. This message explored what it looks like to walk with people as Jesus did. Jesus’ focus and passion was for the mission field of those who are lost. Similarly, as Christ’s disciples, believers’ energies must be directed outward toward building redemptive relationships with people in the places where they feel at home. Believers have to go out into the world and build relationships with people because the world is not bursting down the doors to join churches. The goal

of this message was to help believers start building redemptive relationships.

Sermon 6: “Investigate and Invest in the Soil” (1 Cor 3:6)

Meyer, quoting Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, writes:

Many people today are tired of living without ultimate purpose: putting in hours at the office, paying the bills and making ends meet, keeping themselves entertained with things that rust, fade, and wear out. More and more are coming to the point of saying, “There’s got to be more to life than this!” And here are Christians, holding the keys to meaning in this life and hope for the next. . . . Christians need to start some spiritual conversations and find out who’s interested.¹

This message looked at ways to engage people into spiritual conversations—planting and watering the seeds of the gospel. How can believers prepare themselves for significant spiritual influence? To advance the work of witnessing, believers must carefully investigate and invest in the spiritual soil of unbelievers’ lives. Doing this requires clarity about the types of ground on which the gospel seed is sown, and the loving boldness to ask the cultivating questions out of which life-changing spiritual conversations eventually arise. The message concluded with how to cultivate the ground for significant spiritual conversations with others.

Sermon 7: “Testify to the Truth You Know” (1 Pet 3:15)

What testimony can believers offer to help people move toward a positive direction pertaining to the gospel? Believers can help renew unbelievers’ thoughts and feelings toward Christ and the gospel by testifying to the truth they know through their personal testimony. The apostle Peter makes it clear that a very significant part of a believer’s witness is testifying to the truth they have experienced as a result of inviting Jesus Christ into their life. This message focused on the power of one’s personal testimony by examining the testimonies of the Samaritan’ woman (John 4:28-20), the

¹Daniel Meyer, *Witness Essentials: Evangelism that Makes Disciples* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 107.

blind man (John 9:8-34), and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:2-29). The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life at conversion creates their own personal testimony. Sharing a personal testimony may be the most powerful tool available to the willing witness. As there are no two snowflakes alike, a believer's testimony is unique and unlike anyone else's testimony. A testimony is effective in all cultures, especially the postmodern culture the church faces in America. A believer's life story is often interesting to others, even to those usually unwilling to talk about religious matters. Stories have a way of breaking down barriers. The challenge for believers today is to share their personal testimony in a gentle, respectful, and influential way. The goal of this message was to encourage believers to bear their personal testimony.

Sermon 8: "Nail the Sins That Slay You" (Luke 6:42)

What do believers need to do with the character flaws that potentially compromise their witness? This message took a hard look at the ineffective way some witnesses deal with their own character flaws and those of others, and what Jesus has to say about it. Few things limit the credibility of the believers' witness more than an untransformed Christian lifestyle. Believers need to strengthen their credibility with others, which requires an honest awareness and open confession of their own untransformed lives. By purposefully committing to seek God's help and others in repairing the sins that limit their lives, unbelievers will become more interested in pursuing this pathway to authentic life-change for themselves. The credibility of the believers' testimony is severely compromised if there is not integrity between their words and deeds. Jesus says that before believers presume to guide others, they need to look hard at their own inner life and make sure it is rooted in God in such a way that it bears the kind of fruit others would want for themselves. The goal of this message was to assist believers overcome their sins and weaknesses of the flesh that limit their credibility.

Sermon 9: “Express Grace under Pressure” (2 Cor 1:12)

Throughout his second letter to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul reminds Christians that being followers of Jesus means to live by a different set of motives and standards that are uncommon in the world. This distinctiveness makes Christ’s witnesses like “salt” and “light” that draws people’s attention to God (Matt 5:13-16).

What situations in life offer believers significant opportunities to increase the appeal and influence of their Christian witness? A Christian’s witness becomes dramatically more attractive and credible to unbelievers as they see believers expressing unusual grace in the face of the crushing circumstances that often bring out the worst in people. If believers can display a truly Christlike character when under pressure, it will create curiosity and conversation about their faith and values. This message explored some of the most common circumstances where significant pressure comes upon a witness’s life. Nothing so reveals what a person is truly made of as how they behave under pressure. The goal was to teach believers how to learn and respond to such trials in a way that reveals the power of God at work within them. It is in these moments that believers can actually become the witnesses God desires.

Sermon 10: “Serve Needs” (Matt 5:13-16)

How can acts of service prepare the ground work for people to want to receive the gospel that believers proclaim? Many will be unwilling to consider the truth of the gospel until they experience proof of the love of Christ. Believers will spur newfound interest in the Christian message and life among hardened people only to the extent that their words are preceded or accompanied by Christlike acts of service that address the felt needs of people where they are under pressure. Jesus made it clear that his disciples were to exert a catalytic influence upon the world around them. In this passage, Jesus provides believers with two word pictures that help to describe the nature of this calling. Believers must witness and serve, not for their benefit, but for the benefit of their Lord. Believers

must have the proper motivation for their service and witness. Believers must constantly learn not to be self-centered and self-focused. The only witness more effective than believers who express grace when they are under pressure is when those same believers exhibit love with its sleeves rolled up to others in their moments of profound duress. This message focused on the enormously influential role that taking the form of a servant has in a Christian witness. Believers follow Jesus' pattern by meeting people at the point of their greatest needs.

Sermon 11: "Share the Invitation to Salvation" (Rev 3:20)

The book of Revelation is jam-packed with vivid images of the person of Jesus. He is presented as a lion, a lamb, a reigning king, and more. Few pictures of Christ are as instructive to the ministry of his witnesses, however, as the one found in Revelation 3. Today, believers will meet him as the Great Inviter. It is important that believers take the initiative, not only to share the gospel, but also to ask the person if they want to receive Jesus Christ as Savior into their life.

How can one share the invitation to salvation in a way more likely to yield an authentic and life-changing "yes" from others? Recognizing the resistance some people have to Christianity and spiritual commitment, one needs to invite others toward God in the way modeled by Jesus. When the Holy Spirit instructs that someone may be ready to take the most essential step of faith, one can ask several commitment-advancing questions that may lead them across the line of decision into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. At the end of the day, every Christian witness hopes to help someone say "yes" to beginning a new life with Christ. In this message believers considered the power of invitation and learned from the style of Jesus. Next, believers examined some specific questions they can ask unbelievers in order to assist them in crossing the line of decision into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sermon 12: “A Writ to be a Watchman Witness” (Ezek 3:16-21)

The purpose of this last message in the series serves as an exhortation regarding the seriousness of being a witness. Question: what is a witness? The Bible states that a witness is a believer-priest (1 Pet 2:5-9), a fisher of men (Matt 4:19), a servant (Isa 43:10), and an ambassador (2 Cor 5:20). Of all the different roles and responsibilities a witness must embrace, none are more serious than the call of being a watchman. The task of a watchman in ancient Israel was to inform its inhabitants of the progress of a battle, the approach of an enemy, the approaching of a messenger, or to warn the residents to muster a defense. Just as God called Ezekiel to be a spiritual watchman over the nation of Israel, similarly, witnesses are commissioned to be their brother and neighbors’ keeper (Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27-29; Rom 13:9-10; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8). Witnesses are to warn unbelievers of the judgment to come and their need of salvation.

A writ is a formal order under seal, issued in the name of a sovereign, government, court, or other authority, enjoining the officer or other person to whom it is issued to do or refrain from some specified act. Jesus has given every believer the writ of Matthew 28:18-20 to warn unbelievers of the wrath to come (John 3:36). This passage in Ezekiel teaches that being a watchman (witness) is serious. A watchman (witness) is to warn people of impending danger and possible death. Though each person (sinner) is responsible for their own decision and sin (if they decide either to heed the warning or not), the watchman (witness) who is negligent in his duty to proclaim the warning (gospel), becomes in God’s eyes a manslayer when God takes that person’s life. As a witness, believers must take seriously the call to be faithful in proclaiming the gospel because people’s eternal souls are at stake.

Development of Personal Evangelism Seminar Guide

During the first thirteen weeks of the project, the greatest amount of my time was spent in the development of the personal evangelism seminar guide. I spent

approximately twenty-five hours per week creating the guide. During the first week I consulted with the five-member oversight team (this same team was commissioned with the responsibility of critiquing and evaluating the guide for approved usage in the seminar). I sought their advice, opinion and recommendations. Another reason for meeting with the team was to request their assistance and understand what would be needed in the guide to make it meaningful and relevant. The team made recommendations of articles and books to read that they felt would be beneficial. Each member stressed the need for both the guide as well as the seminar to be interactive and practical. I met with each member individually over the course of the week. Each meeting lasted approximately one hour. This five-member oversight team was selected based upon their ministerial knowledge and experience, especially pertaining to evangelism. The team consisted of a church planter/pastor who built his church on a strong evangelism paradigm and was a former staff member for Campus Crusade for Christ; a pastor and former IMB missionary who had completed his D.Min project on evangelism in the twenty-first century; an adjunct New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary professor and minister of Christian education; the local association's church planting strategist; and the local association's director of missions.

Also beginning in the first week, I began extracting information for the composition for the guide by reading books on evangelism. One of the benefits of this endeavor was that I was able to use information for the guide to help me in sermon preparation. The ten books took one week each to read along with determining the pertinent information to include in the seminar guide.² The reading ended at week 10.

²Joe Aldrich, *Life-Style Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those around You* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1999); Will McRaney, Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003); W. Oscar Thompson, Jr., and Carolyn Thompson Ritzmann, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999); Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1963); Bill Hybels and Ashley Wiersma, *Just Walk Across the Room* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

During week 11, I compiled, edited, and organized the notes obtained from the ten books in order to produce the guide. In the same week, a proofreading team reviewed the guide for corrections, errors, and grammar. Once the proof reading team completed their job, at the beginning of week 12, I proceeded to the next phase. I delivered (by email) the guide to the five-member oversight team for their analysis, critique, and evaluation. The team was given ten days to complete the task. This was a critical stage. The team evaluated the guide using the Seminar Guide Feasibility Study (SGFS) as a rubric. The ability to use the guide was predicated upon receiving an 80 percent approval from the team. I was blessed to receive 100 percent approval from the team. After receiving approval, the guide was printed, and I worked with my wife and a church member to create a PowerPoint presentation to help enhance and facilitate the teaching and training element of the guide at the seminar. The final aspects of the guide concluded at the end of week 13.

Implementation of Personal Evangelism Seminar Guide

The implementation of the personal evangelism seminar occurred over a weekend period (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon). The period of time coincided with CrossWay's congregational retreat. Fifteen people attended the seminar. An overview of the seminar occurred on Friday evening. On Friday evening after a time of music and prayer (each session going forward was opened with music and prayer), I began with an overview of the seminar. The seminar's overview consisted of three elements: (1) the purpose for the seminar, (2) the connection between the sermon series ("Be My Witness") and the seminar, and 3) my aspirations of what I hoped CrossWay would encounter from this experience. At the same time, I made everyone aware of my need for their assistance

2006); Lewis Sperry Chafer, *True Evangelism: Winning Souls through Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993); J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961); Bill Bright, *Witnessing without Fear: How to Share Your Faith with Confidence* (San Bernardino: Here's Life, 1987); Wayne McDill, *Making Friends for Christ: A Practical Approach to Relational Evangelism* (Maitland, FL: Xulon, 2013); Mark Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007).

in regards to this project. Since this seminar entailed an academic element as part of my project, I needed their participation in completing the surveys that would be administered to them throughout the weekend. I conducted the three sessions on Saturday and one on Sunday. I kept to the four ninety-minute sessions that were planned.

There were three surveys throughout the weekend. The first survey was given on Friday evening after completion of the overview, the Post-Project Survey: Be My Witness Sermon Series. One of the goals of this survey was to gauge the impact of the proclamation of the Word of God in effecting change in the life of believers' attitudes pertaining to evangelism. This survey was used to compare the responses given in the Pre-Project Survey: Be My Witness Sermon Series that was completed during week 2 by the participants. The second survey, a Pre-Project Survey: Intentional Relationship Building, was given to participants on Saturday morning prior to the start of the first session. This survey assessed believers' level of comfort and perspective towards personal evangelism. The third and final survey, a Post-Project Survey: Intentional Relationship Building, was administered Sunday after the completion of the last seminar. The outcome of this survey determined the seminar's effectiveness in assisting believers to practice personal evangelism as a way of life.

Friday's overview instructed participants what to expect from the seminar and the seminar guide. The purpose behind the seminar and guide was to provide a tool to assist believers in fulfilling their call to live out the Great Commission through engaging in personal evangelism. Emphasis was placed on the fact that going through the seminar and guide would not transform them into a witness who practices personal evangelism as a way of life. The overall goal was to assist believers in their development of being transformed by the Holy Spirit into an effective witnesses for Christ who would practice personal evangelism as a way of life. The overview topics consisted of an introduction, explanation of the guide, the goals of the guide, defining personal evangelism, and the reasons for practicing personal evangelism. The overview lasted approximately one hour.

On Saturday, I led the sessions scheduled for the day. The first session, “The Most Important Entity,” examined four topics that are crucial and necessary for personal evangelism. The four topics were “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Personal Evangelism,” “The Role of the Holy Spirit Pertaining to Prayer in Witnessing,” “The Role of the Holy Spirit Pertaining to the Gospel in Witnessing,” and “The Role of the Holy Spirit Pertaining to One’s Personal Testimony.” The guide contained Scripture references that provided biblical credence. Each participant took turns reading the applicable Bible passages throughout all the sessions. Also, to stimulate the learning environment, the guide was designed with fill in the blanks responses. The second session covered Relational Evangelism. Most of this material was based upon Wayne McDill’s book, *Making Friends for Christ: A Practical Approach to Relational Evangelism*. Topics included “Why Relational Evangelism,” “Re-Thinking One’s Mission,” “The Web of Relationships,” “A Listening Ear” (developing listening skills), “Overcoming Relational Barriers” (common fears pertaining to witnessing), “Growing Friendships,” and the “Power of Love” (proper motivation for evangelism). This session ran past the allotted ninety-minutes due to the length of material as well as participants asking questions. In session 3, I combined Lifestyle and Servanthood Evangelism. Though I read several books on lifestyle evangelism, most of the material covered in the session came from *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* by Joe Aldrich and *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* by W. Oscar Thompson. From these two books, I dealt with the importance of lifestyle evangelism and the biblical pattern of lifestyle evangelism in the New Testament. On servanthood evangelism, I drew my research from Steve Sjogren’s book, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* and Alvin Reid’s book *Introduction to Evangelism* (chapter 12: “Out of the Sanctuary into Reality: Mobilizing for Personal Evangelism”). The topics were focused upon the strengths and cautions of servanthood evangelism.

Sunday concluded the seminars with session 4, Intentional Evangelism and the Conclusion. Bill Hybels' book, *Just Walk across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith* was the basis for understanding intentional witnessing. Since intentional witnessing is more about a biblical attitude versus an approach to evangelism (lifestyle, relational and servanthood), greater emphasis was placed upon ways of being intentional and taking the initiative (building friendships/relationships, praying, taking risks, inviting people to church and being willing to leave one's comfort zone). The conclusion of the session issued a challenge to the participants to live out the calling of making witnessing a way of life by praying and seeking to build intentional relationships with people for the express purpose of sharing Christ. I ended the session with challenging the participants to acquire an accountability (prayer) partner to hold them accountable in building and developing an intentional relationship with someone for the purpose of sharing the gospel. Six weeks after the seminar, I followed up with the participants to see how they progressed in their development pertaining to personal evangelism and relationship building. Completing this seminar (along with the seminar guide), concluded the last of the three objectives this project sought to achieve. Week 15 of the project was utilized to analyze and document the results of the participants' surveys.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the details of a project with the goal of developing members who practice lifestyle evangelism. In chapter 5, I demonstrate, through research data, that the project was successful in obtaining its goal. The church benefited from the project. In addition, I furnish recommendations for improvement, point out strengths and weaknesses of the project, what I would do differently, supply theological and personal reflections, and provide concluding remarks on the project.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND PROJECT EVALUATION

This chapter presents an inclusive and summative culmination of the biblical, theological, and theoretical research pertaining to the project. This project implemented a strategy at CrossWay Christian Fellowship, Pelham, Alabama, to develop members who practice lifestyle evangelism.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

My ambition and aspiration for this assignment was to implement a strategy that would be the primary means for developing members at CrossWay who would practice lifestyle evangelism. One of the purposes of this project was for CrossWay members to be made aware of their responsibility for witnessing. Consequently, believers understood that witnessing is not just the pastor's obligation alone. They accepted the fact that witnessing is a way of life for every person who gave Christ their life as Savior. Based upon the responses from the sermon series, the seminar guide's oversight team, and the surveys from the seminar, this project achieved its overall objective in providing a system to equip believers to witness as a way of life. As a result of obtaining a positive outcome from this endeavor, CrossWay can proceed with confidence and faith in carrying out its vision to glorify God as a witnessing community.

Witnessing for Christ is how the Christian carries out the business of worship. Worshiping God and witnessing for Christ cannot be separated from each other; they are interwoven together. One of the messages from the sermon series, from Luke 19:9-10, instructed CrossWay members that God seeks (desires) to save people who do not have a relationship with Him. Scripture teaches that the worship of God leads to witnessing for

Him. Witnessing for Christ is another way of glorifying God, both personally and corporately. One of Jesus' primary missions in finishing the Father's work in coming to the earth is to bring salvation to all mankind. By being a witness for Jesus, CrossWay, both individually and corporately, carries out and executes the agenda and mission of God. Witnessing for Christ is not an option for members and attendees at CrossWay; it is commanded and mandated in the Scriptures. All of a Christian's witness for Christ must point to the message of the gospel.

Part of the purpose of this project was to educate CrossWay's members and attendees that witnessing for Christ and making disciples of all mankind is the responsibility of every believer and the body of Christ collectively. God desires and commands for Christians to be His witnesses. CrossWay will glorify the Father through the witness of Christ. CrossWay does not have the freedom to decide if it is going to witness for Christ because Jesus has commanded the church to be his witness and to make disciples of all mankind around the world. God has given clear directives in His Word about witnessing with the expectation of reaping a harvest based upon obedience to Him.

This project provided a plan for empowering believers for taking their God-given responsibility in owning the ministry of evangelism. For CrossWay members, this project furnished for them a process for knowing what witnessing looks like. Prior to this assignment, CrossWay understood the need and necessity for evangelism, however, the challenge was determining what would be the best approach and system. The desire was to have an effective practice that was biblically-balanced, God-honoring and culturally-relevant.

CrossWay places a high priority on utilizing all of its combined outreach efforts and activities for the sole purpose of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the unbeliever. The primary mission in relation to the non-Christian world is evangelism with the goal of incorporating new converts into the church, edifying and equipping them for reproduction.

All believers are called to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5), and the most effective method of winning people to Christ is through existing relationships with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc., (John 1:41, 42, 45) and being intentional in building new relationships with people with the intent of sharing the gospel. This is one of the methods of evangelism; it is not a program but a way of life where believers do evangelism wherever the opportunity occurs.

As a pastor, I wanted for the church as a whole, to put into practice CrossWay’s core value of teamwork. CrossWay working corporately together in evangelizing the surrounding neighborhoods through a variety of community involvement and service projects. As an outcome of this project, CrossWay now believes that servant evangelism is one of the best ways as a corporate body of Christ to demonstrate the love of God; through serving people and building a bridge to share the gospel of Christ.

One of my personal desires was to have an evangelism system in place that would fit in the communities where CrossWay ministers. CrossWay members needed an approach that would enable them to build relationships with people as their lives intersect with one another. CrossWay’s Communication Cards clearly revealed that people who visit do not elect to have CrossWay’s members or pastor visit them in their home. As a pastor who has been certified as teacher/trainer in Evangelism Explosion III International Equipping Ministry (EE), I recognized that this type of approach would not be effective in CrossWay’s environment. The EE approach is designed and predicated upon a church’s visitation program. CrossWay members must have an approach that would assist them in building intentional relationships with people in their circle of life; at work, at school, with their neighbors, and wherever they come into contact with people. The purpose of having this system in place was not just to meet the academic requirements of the project and seminary, but to have a standardized process for assimilating members for practicing lifestyle evangelism.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal was to convince and persuade attendees and members at CrossWay to embrace witnessing as a way of life. The first method was by preaching a sermon series during the regular worship services on Sunday mornings. This was predicated on the belief that God's Word is the catalyst for spiritual transformation in the lives of believers and that God's Word would accomplish His purpose (Isa 55:11). The overall feedback from the surveys was positive. Twelve attendees and members completed both the Be My Witness pre and post-surveys. This first set of pre and post-surveys was not conducive to statistical analysis (such as a t-test for dependent samples). The post-survey asked participants open-ended questions that required subjective feedback. Seventy-five percent noted that the sermon series changed their attitudes about their personal responsibility in being a witness for Jesus. Fifty-five percent indicated that as a result of the sermon series they have taken action in their lives to change their behavior in being a witness. Another 75 percent stated they learned new information about being a witness that they did not know as a result of the sermon series. When asked if there was anything they disliked about the sermon series, there were no comments. I asked the participants what they liked about the sermon series and their responses were "it served as a good reminder about witnessing as a way of life;" "learned that being a witness is a lifestyle, not an obligation;" "discovered different ways of being a witness;" and "the clarity from the Bible in the Old and New Testament about witnessing." As a whole, 92 percent indicated that the sermon series was a positive experience.

The second goal, the creation of a seminar that would equip believers in building intentional relationships with people for the express purpose of practicing lifestyle evangelism, received unanimous approval from the five-member oversight team (hereafter referred to as "the team"). The primary tool for the seminar was the production of a personal evangelism seminar guide (hereafter referred to as "the guide"). The success of implementing the seminar was largely based upon the feasibility of the guide to

accomplish the goals outlined for the project. The team conveyed that the guide would definitely meet the goals of exposing and equipping believers for the ministry of personal evangelism. One member implied that the guide was exhaustive enough to provide ample information for a lay person to have an excellent understanding of what it meant to build a relationship with someone for the purpose of sharing the gospel. In expressing that the guide was feasible in accomplishing the goals outlined for the seminar, the team stressed that the guide gives a good explanation and summary of relational, intentional, lifestyle and servanthood evangelism. For example, one team member communicated that the guide has a statement of the goals of the seminar which were to focus on relational, intentional, lifestyle and servanthood evangelism. This same team member remarked that he liked the emphasis on witnessing; that failure as a witness does not come when people do not respond to the message but only when one does not share the message. Another team member pointed out that a clear strength of the guide was that it is biblically rich. In principle, the guide proved to be sufficient to facilitate the third goal of the project, the implementation of the seminar.

The third and final goal, the implementation of a seminar that educated and equipped members to practice lifestyle evangelism, tested positive. The positive results were verified by the participants' feedback to the Intentional Relationship Building pre and post-surveys. In determining how effective the seminar was in achieving the stated goals and being a viable system for training believers for lifestyle evangelism, the survey analyzed twelve areas that are significant for relationship building and personal evangelism. Of the twelve, eleven areas reported a positive increase. The only area where participants experienced no change from the seminar was their desire to lead people to Christ. The areas indicating the greatest difference in improvement were being comfortable speaking of God's saving work in their life; being able to present the plan of salvation; and being able to lead someone through a prayer of commitment. The second areas that displayed advancement in the participants' lives pertaining to witnessing

consisted of being responsible for sharing the gospel; believing that conversations can lead to conversions; being able to explain to unbelievers how to have a personal relationship with Jesus; and being willing to explain to unbelievers how to receive Jesus as Savior. The last areas that represented transformation in the participants' mindset towards lifestyle evangelism were being able to use a Bible or Bible verse to explain their faith in Christ; being confident that God could use their personal testimony; feeling comfortable in sharing their testimony with unbelievers; and being certain of their salvation before God in Christ.

In order to quantify the validity of the pre and post-Intentional Relationship Building surveys, a t-test for paired two sample means was conducted. The results of the t-test for paired two-sample means was compiled from a total number of 10 completed pre and post-Intentional Relationship Building surveys. In comparing the means, the means increased from 76.4 to 79. There was a positive difference between the t-Stat (2.78571) and the t-Critical two-tail value (2.262157—a difference of .523553). This positive difference indicates that the implementation of the seminar made a change. Since the p value (.021202) is less than .05, it can be stated that the difference was not by chance and that the seminar made a difference. The implementation of the personal evangelism seminar to the attendees made a statistically difference resulting in the increase of the knowledge pertaining to evangelism ($t = 2.78571$, $p < .02$). The completion and the results of this project proved that this endeavor was beneficial.

Strengths of the Project

In reviewing the surveys, it became apparent that the single major strength that affected attitude and inspired life change in the members at CrossWay to practice lifestyle evangelism was the exposure to the Word of God. The project brought a new awareness to CrossWay's members and attendees of what the Bible and Jesus expect of His people in being His witnesses. The results from the Intentional Relationship Building

pre and post-surveys testified that participants experienced an evolution in their spiritual growth. One of the team members felt that the guide had an excellent introduction about why a new approach to personal evangelism was needed in the twenty-first century. Also, he stated that he liked how the guide differentiated between witnessing and soul-winning. He concluded that the guide contained a good introduction and conclusion, both of which focused on the essential teaching and purposes of the guide. Another comment stated that the seminar unfolded the nature of the gospel, what being a witness means, and how relationships provide the channel to connect the gospel with the lives of their friends. An additional feedback expressed that the seminar was practical for engaging in lifestyle evangelism, identified and countered the common challenges that would keep believers from witnessing, and provided motivation and encouragement to begin a lifestyle of relational evangelism.

Weaknesses of the Project

The participants indicated there was room for improvement in the sermon series. The question asked, “What one thing would you change about the sermon series to make it better for someone else in the future?” In response, this is some of the feedback I obtained was talk more on a practical level (touch more on reality in being a witness); simplify the sermons from the notes and get to the point; some of the points I should have gone in depth; more tie-in to Scripture (sometimes some people found it difficult to connect Scripture to the point); and breaking down the length of the sermon better to hold the attention of the hearer.

Another area of weakness with the project pertained to the guide used for the seminar. Eighty percent of the five-member oversight team revealed that the guide contained too much material to be covered in six hours. Consensus stated that the information, though relevant, was too much for the average lay person. One team member stated that a lay person would be overwhelmed at the amount of material to be

processed in such a short time period. As a result, it did become a challenge in managing the content and time allocated for each session. Along with too much material for the allotted time, the guide dictated so much time that adequate time was not allowed for each session to have a practicum. This practicum would have served in allowing participants the ability to practice the approaches that were discussed in the seminar (i.e., such as listening skills, testimony writing exercises, learning to discover people stories by asking effective questions and participants learning how to share their testimony). One person stated that giving the participants' time to talk about how to develop these skills and attitudes as well as opportunities to practice the processes would be helpful in developing effective, Spirit-filled witnesses for Christ.

What I Would Do Differently

In reflecting on the project, if I could have done it differently, I would make one improvement. The major area of improvement would be to create a corporate evangelistic atmosphere at CrossWay. One of the ways this could have been achieved would have been to saturate CrossWay's atmosphere with prayer and the Word of God pertaining to evangelism. The main area that lacked this expression was in the small group ministry. I could have incorporated the sermon series theme simultaneously within the small group ministry. Also, I would have organized and written a daily devotional guide with a weekly scripture memory verse around the sermon series to re-enforce the sermon message. The devotional would cover Scripture passages that I was not able to cover during the message. In addition, the daily devotional would challenge each believer to go more in depth pertaining to the topic. Instead of participants getting one lump sum of the Word of God on Sundays only, the Word would be spread out over the week with the participants, having a more lasting and sustaining influence.

Theological Reflections

My viewpoint about evangelism was changed as a result of the project. Prior to

this project, I operated and taught that witnessing was task driven (doing) versus Christian identification driven (being). Believers' lifestyle and motivation for evangelism should not result from legalism. In exhorting believers to practice personal evangelism, depending on how evangelism is communicated, there is a chance that it could lead to wrong perceptions. Instead of driving people to perform a spiritual task, a proper focus is to help believers understand who they are in Christ and assist them in their spiritual development and health. One of the by-products of developing healthy believers is that healthy Christians share their experience and faith in Christ enthusiastically, not out of compulsion. After studying the Bible and being corrected in my thinking towards evangelism, this experience gave me insight into why some believers are resistant toward witnessing.

I also gained a new perspective (that I shared with the congregation) on Matthew 6:33 and 1 Corinthians 3:5-8 pertaining to evangelism. I learned that the focus of evangelism must be totally on growing God's kingdom and His universal church, not concerned about growing local, individualized churches (fellowships). When believers center on God's agenda for His glory, God in-turn grows individual local churches as He sees fit, not as we (as humans beings) see fit. The reality is that God truly determines the size of local churches, not us (despite how one may believe that preaching, teaching, marketing, etc., are responsible for the size of churches). This lesson provided greater motivation for me as a church planter and pastor to be actively involved in witnessing. The key is faithfulness (which we control), not fruitfulness (which only God can control).

Personal Reflections

I found this project a catalyst for personal revival. I was reminded as to why evangelism is so important. As a result, this project helped me re-adjust my priorities as a church planter and pastor. Jesus told Martha, "You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the better" (Luke 10:41-42).

Sometimes in life, one can become so busy with good things, but not busy doing the best things. In doing “the good things” a person can get out of touch and lose focus and perspective, thus be out of alignment with the Lord. This out of alignment can cause stress, discouragement, and depression. The apostle Paul’s recommendation for believers to be re-aligned properly is, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing perfect will” (Rom 12:2). As a church planting pastor, the times have been many and numerous with my concern the disappointing rate (or lack thereof) of growth CrossWay has achieved. I have been focusing on the wrong element. Instead of focusing on results, I have learned that I should apply my energies toward the health of the church (members). Healthy members evangelize. I need to remember that one of God’s will for CrossWay members is to be active in sharing their faith and testimony and not to be concerned about results or numerical growth. Along with that, the proper motivation for witnessing is to glorify God and seek to expand His kingdom instead of being self-centered, seeking only to add bodies and numbers to CrossWay. The best thing in life is for a person to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to share with other people how they may have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Man’s greatest need is the forgiveness of his sins, which is a desire every person should have. As believers, one must not have fear in sharing the gospel with another. The challenge before me is to transfer the passion I have for evangelism to the members and attendees of CrossWay. Another challenge I have as a pastor is consistently leading by example in modeling that witnessing is a way of life and a lifestyle to be pursued.

This project also re-enforced one of the areas that I have a passion for—evangelism. It can also become a weakness. The single mission at CrossWay (to glorify God) expresses itself in three areas: worshiping, witnessing and working. As there is perfect balance in the Trinity, I must strive to balance the ministry priorities at CrossWay.

Evangelism is the one area I am prone to emphasize.

Conclusion

This project provided a significant first step in the right direction pertaining to CrossWay's ministry in the area of evangelism. The fifteen-week endeavor provided the impetus the members needed to actively practice lifestyle evangelism. Having a system and strategy in place should give members confidence to know that CrossWay has an intentional plan for evangelism. The evangelism foundation has been installed to transport CrossWay forward into the future. Though the assignment is ending, this project launches CrossWay into a new beginning.

APPENDIX 1

SERMON RESPONSE SURVEY

This research is being conducted by Frederick Muse for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. The following information will appear on the Sermon Response Card:

- a. Circle to indicate either: Male or Female / Member or Visitor.
- b. Place check mark if applicable:
 - i. No, I did not understand the purpose of the message this morning.
 - ii. Yes, I did understand the purpose of the message this morning.
 - iii. If yes, in one sentence or a few words write what you thought was the focus of today's message:

 - iv. If yes, did today's message change your attitude in a positive way about being a witness for Jesus? Yes No

APPENDIX 2

BE A WITNESS COMMITMENT CARD

Goal 1: Be a Witness Commitment Card. The following information will appear on the Be a Witness Commitment Card:

Today, I commit myself to consistently praying for the lost, praying for Divine appointments and that CrossWay and I will be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission by my commitment to the following five 'Be a Witness' principles:

1. I will seek to develop or sustain a Christ-like relationship with a non-churched or unbeliever.
2. I will invite a non-churched or unbeliever to church with me at CrossWay.
3. I will share my testimony, the gospel or my faith with a non-church or unbeliever.
4. I will seek to involve a non-church or unbeliever in a small group Bible study.
5. I will be involved in CrossWay's personal and corporate witnessing ministry.

Signed _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PRE-SEMINAR
AND POST-SEMINAR SURVEY

This research is being conducted by Frederick Muse for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. The following statements will appear on the IRB Survey:

Answer the following questions using the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

1. I am comfortable speaking of God's saving work in my life.
SD D DS AS A SA
2. I am certain of my salvation before God through Christ.
SD D DS AS A SA
3. I feel responsible to share the gospel.
SD D DS AS A SA
4. I feel comfortable in sharing my personal testimony with unbelievers.
SD D DS AS A SA
5. I am confident that God can use my testimony.
SD D DS AS A SA
6. I am able to use a Bible or Bible verse to explain my faith in Christ.
SD D DS AS A SA
7. I am able to explain to unbelievers how to have a personal relationship with Jesus.
SD D DS AS A SA
8. I am willing to explain to unbelievers how to receive Jesus as Savior.
SD D DS AS A SA
9. I am able to present the plan of salvation.
SD D DS AS A SA
10. I want to lead people to Christ.
SD D DS AS A SA

11. I believe that conversations can lead to conversions.
SD D DS AS A SA

12. I am able to lead someone through a prayer of commitment.
SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 4

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ASSESSMENT PRE-PROJECT AND
POST-PROJECT SURVEY

This research is being conducted by Frederick Muse for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. The following statements will appear on the SGA Survey:

Answer the following questions using the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

1. I believe God has a specific plan and purpose for my life.
SD D DS AS A SA
2. I believe my spiritual development and growth does not impact my personal happiness in life.
SD D DS AS A SA
3. I believe I can be a Christian and not serve in a local church.
SD D DS AS A SA
4. I believe that being a witness for Christ is optional for being a Christian.
SD D DS AS A SA
5. I believe if I do not participate in being a witness, it will not affect CrossWay's witness as a church.
SD D DS AS A SA
6. Being an ambassador for Christ is the role and responsibility of the pastor and church leaders only.
SD D DS AS A SA
7. I can have a relationship with God and not share my faith.
SD D DS AS A SA
8. Regardless if CrossWay has servant evangelism projects, CrossWay's growth is totally dependent upon God's actions and not anything we do as a church.
SD D DS AS A SA

9. I believe that the preaching of the Bible plays an important role in what I believe and how I conduct myself as a Christian.

SD D DS AS A SA

10. I believe that the preaching of the Bible plays an important role in the direction and life of the church.

SD D DS AS A SA

Complete the following sentences:

- I believe CrossWay Christian Fellowship exists for the purpose of...
- In the past six to eight weeks I have been involved in evangelism by...
- For CrossWay to glorify God as a church, it is critical that we...

APPENDIX 5

PRE-SEMINAR AND POST-SEMINAR SURVEY RESULTS

Table A1. Pre-seminar survey responses

Participant	Question												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	7	7	7	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	7	6	80
2	6	7	7	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	82
3	7	7	7	6	6	6	7	6	5	7	7	6	77
4	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	82
5	6	7	5	6	7	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	69
6	4	6	5	2	5	3	5	5	6	6	7	6	60
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
9	6	7	5	7	7	5	6	5	5	7	6	5	71
10	6	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	75
Total	63	69	64	61	66	60	63	62	62	67	66	61	

Table A2. Post-seminar survey responses

Participant	Question												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	7	7	7	6	7	7	6	7	7	7	7	6	81
2	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
3	7	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	79
4	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
5	7	6	6	6	7	5	6	6	4	6	6	6	71
6	5	6	6	2	5	4	5	5	5	6	7	6	62
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	84
9	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	7	6	7	7	7	81
10	7	7	7	6	7	6	7	7	6	6	7	7	80
Total	68	68	68	61	68	62	64	66	62	67	69	67	

Table A3. T-test for dependent samples

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Mean	76.4	79
Variance	60.71111111	51.33333333
Observations	10	10
Pearson Correlation	0.925500419	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	9	
t Stat	-2.785714286	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.010600909	
t Critical one-tail	1.833112923	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.021201819	
t Critical two-tail	2.262157158	

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ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY AT CROSSWAY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, PELHAM, ALABAMA, TO DEVELOP MEMBERS WHO PRACTICE LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM

Frederick Clay Muse, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. T. Vaughn Walker

The purpose of this project was to meet the most prevalent need for the future survival of CrossWay Christian Fellowship. The project's purpose was to create a system to train future believers in how to practice lifestyle evangelism.

The Scriptures are clear that being God's witnesses have a prominent place in the lives of believers. Chapter 2 describes people both in the Old and New Testament that become witnesses as a result of experiencing God's salvation.

Chapter 3 explains the practical aspects of how believers impart the gospel through different approaches to witnessing. The goal of each of these approaches is to assist believers to embody lifestyle evangelism.

Chapter 4 gives the details of the project implementation. This project utilized different tools to develop members to practice lifestyle evangelism. The different tools equipped and empowered CrossWay believers to practice intentional, relational, and servanthood evangelism techniques.

The evaluation of this project is displayed in chapter 5, which involved analyzing the data obtained from CrossWay's participants who participated in the various surveys that were conducted during the fifteen week implementation phase. The research revealed strengths and weaknesses of the project.

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